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Comments: Mary Erickson Custer Gallatin National Forest

Attn: Forest Plan Revision

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June 6, 2019

Dear Forest Supervisor Erickson,

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to submit my comments and to voice my opinions and concerns regarding the Custer Gallatin Forest Plan. I also want to extend my gratitude for your team's efforts in the creation of this Plan.

The conflict of listing bison as a species of conservation concern has been debated throughout this entire revision process. While the Yellowstone bison population is currently at an all-time high, they were almost extinct a century ago with only about two dozen bison left in Yellowstone National Park. Strict regulations and efforts need to be made ensure this valuable population does not suffer the same kind of defeat as it has in the past.

I agree with the decision to not list Yellowstone bison as a species of conservation concern but with that in mind, I feel Alternative D is best as it incorporates the most proactive and expansive bison management plan. With the addition of "tolerance zones" in December of 2015 and continued monitoring of the bison population and its necessary habitat, I trust it is possible to see sustained and growing bison populations in the Park.

Additionally, I believe that the Forest Service should ensure that forest activities do not compromise future bison habitat, and that vegetation management restores habitat to support bison in the future. Recolonizing bison in the Custer Gallatin National Forest plan area should be a top priority as this is the first step in restoring this native species in its natural habitat.

I am in support of Alternative D by setting strong standards to achieve the "desired condition" of viable, self-sustaining populations of Yellowstone bison on the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

Thank you,
Marilla Harris-Vincent