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Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the CGNF DEIS.

I support the Gallatin Forest Partnership (GFP) Agreement: <http://gallatinpartners.org/> and its full implementation. This GFP agreement is balanced and included a diverse group of stakeholders(e.g., hikers, mountain bikers, backcountry skiers, backcountry horsemen, guest ranches, hunters, anglers, conservationists, and those who enjoy looking for and at wildlife). The agreement they developed supports wildlife, the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, for the people who live here now and those that will come behind us.

I hike, ski, and view flowers and birds and other wildlife in the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area (WSA). It will be important to keep motorized and mechanized uses out of this area for the protection of the wildlife and the ability to have a wilderness experience when in the area. In Hyalite I have seen many nonconforming uses of this area that preclude the ability to experience solitude, including snow mobiles and motorcycles in areas where they are not permitted.

I have seen many bears (black and grizzly), moose, mountain goats, lynx, skunks, and small animals in the Gallatin and Madison Ranges over the years, and believe the wildlife should be protected. Minimizing trails will protect the flora and fauna, promote clean water and fish in the area.

I would like to see recommended wilderness managed for horse and foot with no nonconforming uses. This does a better job of protecting wildlife from motorized incursions. Although foot and horse traffic have an impact, the quiet use of these areas is less stressful for wildlife and for humans.

According to Conservation Biology principles, larger protected areas are better than smaller patches of habitat. Adding adjacent roadless lands to existing wilderness is important for enhancing the overall conservation value.

Recommended wilderness should be maintained for primitive recreation. Again, this is less stressful on wildlife habitat, flora and fauna and on humans recreating in the area.

Gallatin Range

Recommend increasing the acreage to the 229,000 recommended in the GFP. South Cottonwood should be added as well as the Porcupine and Buffalo Horn drainages. With increasing human population pressures near the Gallatin Range, it is important that we protect this area to maintain wildlife corridors, and plant and bird habitats.

I support the recommended wilderness proposed with expansions to include the northern part of the Gallatin Crest to Hyalite Lake, Cowboy Heaven, and the Big Creek watershed on the east side of the Gallatins. The Buffalo Horn Backcountry Area designation does not provide enough protection to the wildlife using the area. The Gallatin Forest Partnership Agreement recommends a Porcupine Buffalo Horn Wildlife Management Area with ample allowance for recreation but stronger wildlife protection. The Buffalo Horn drainage is the most important wildlife habitat in the Gallatin Range and should be wilderness.

Madison Range

I support the GFP agreement that includes recommending the 16,000 acres of wild, roadless area known as Cowboy Heaven as recommended Wilderness. This is a 17,000-acre roadless area that connects the Beartrap Canyon Wilderness and Spanish Peaks to the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. I have hiked in this area many times and believe its scenic beauty; wildlife habitat and flora and fauna should be protected. This addition would join along the west side to the recommended wilderness area in the Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest

Pryor Mountains

I support the recommendations of the Pryors Coalition (<http://www.pryormountains.org/>) for the Pryor Mountains an island mountain range that is unique in terms of geology, ecology, and biology as well as being culturally significant to several Native American tribes including the Apsaalooke (Crow) Nation. The use of plants, some endemic to the Pryors, for medicinal purposes is especially significant to the Crow peoples.

I encourage CGNF to adopt alternative D for these four areas as recommended wilderness: Lost Canyon (~13,000), Big Pryor Mountain (~12,000 acres), Bear Canyon (~10,000 areas), and Punch Bowl (~8,500 acres). Each of these areas is distinctly different and each contains wilderness characteristics, a multitude of rare plants including those that are endemic to the Pryors, opportunities for solitude and for primitive recreation, and developments that are substantially unnoticeable. The wildness of these acreages deserves permanent protection to maintain current wilderness characteristics and sustain existing flora and fauna.

A management plan addressing recreation needs to be defined for the Pryors. Designating recommended wilderness areas would enhance opportunities for primitive recreation. Ample opportunities already exist for motorized and mechanized recreation and almost all would remain if the four areas listed above would be designated as recommended wilderness as proposed in Alternative D. Without further management directives regarding primitive recreation, technological innovations, such as electric mountain bikes, would turn formerly mechanized mountain bike transportation into motorized recreation.

Lionhead/Henry's Mountains

The Lionhead links the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the High Divide. I recommend maintaining the existing 22,800 acres of recommended Wilderness in the Lionhead as stated in Alternative A. I urge that travel management to allow for only foot and stock use to enable eligibility for Wilderness designation by Congress.

Absaroka Beartooth Mountains

I have hiked here many times and support the following areas as recommended wilderness that are called out in Alternative D: Dome Mountain, East Rosebud to Stillwater, Woodbine, Chico Peak, Emigrant Peak, and Red Lodge Creek.

As proposed in Alternative B, I support prohibiting mechanized and motorized use in the Bad Canyon of the Absaroka-Beartooth Geographic .

Wild and Scenic Rivers

I support the recommendations made by America Rivers. Native fish rely on habits of cold, clear streams for sustainability. The forest plan needs to identify the ways in which fish refugia will be protected.