

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/2/2022 2:02:30 AM

First name: Melissa

Last name: Warfield

Organization:

Title:

Comments: South Plateau Landscape Area Treatment Project (SPLAT). The U.S. Forest Service is proposing to punch 56 miles of roads into the Hebgen Basin to log, bulldoze and/or burn 23 square miles of prime wildlife habitat, extracting 80 miles board feet of timber. Custer Gallatin is undertaking a project to log nearly 959 miles of wildlife habitat and plow over 15 miles of roads into the bison's winter range and spring calving grounds. The Yellowstone bison are a candidate species for listing as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Wild bison are not mentioned anywhere in the Forest Service's sparse documentation of the proposal - road building, logging and burning will occur in or near a habitat for threatened wildlife species. Wildlife populations have been reduced by an average of 80% due to habitat destruction and degradation like SPLAT. The decline in wildlife populations is due to mismanagement of public wildlands by agencies like the Forest Service. The Custer Gallatin intends to use fire near highway 20. By burning along the highway creates a hazard to the bison and people who drive highway 20. Collisions along highways 20 and 191 have resulted in deaths of wildlife. Please divert wildlife away from death traps. Please consider constructing an overpass and underpass so the wildlife will be able to pass over and under without collisions happening. Wildlife biologists heed to evaluate how logging, building roads, and prescribing fire near highways in Hebgen Basin effects migratory bison. Fire can be beneficial for habitat in the range of migratory bison, it needs to be used in a manner that doesn't draw bison onto or across highways. The Custer Gallatin's analysis - logging 32 square miles of habitat and building 71 miles of road on the South Plateau and North Hebgen is somehow beneficial to wildlife species - does not pass muster. The Custer Gallatin needs to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement of all logging and road building underway and planned in Hebgen Basin, including in the South Plateau and North Hebgen. Cumulatively logging over 20,000 acres of habitat and building 71 miles of roads is a major action and significant long-term harm to wildlife, soils and water quality. World class scenic views and visitors hiking the trails along the Continental Divide will also be harmed. More roads should be removed - not built. Providing secure habitat for all wildlife, reduce sediment running into creeks and rivers in Hebgen Basin. Resiliency, the oft-repeated purpose of SPLAT, means the ability of wildlife species to withstand systematic pressures, random perturbations and harmful events. According to Shaffer & Stein, Safeguarding our Precious Heritage (Oxford University Press 2000), "resiliency is also essential for the long-term survival of species.". The size, degree and duration of the Custer Gallatin's logging and road building projects impairs the resiliency for wildlife species and the ecosystem in Hebgen Basin. I am urging Custer Gallatin to withdraw the SPLAT. I oppose SPLAT and would like to see an environmental impact analysis and concern of Yellowstone's wildlife.