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Comments: I strongly oppose the opening of another road in Yellowstone National Park. This highly industrial process does not benefit the wildlife in any way. As an frequent visitor of our national parks, exploiting the habitat of our protected wildlife, for profit of a logging industry, is an endangerment to the wildlife our national parks are suppose to protect.

"This is a massive road building and logging project," according to Darrell Geist, Buffalo Field Campaign's habitat coordinator. "It's in Hebgen Basin where migratory buffalo roam the National Forest, and where the Custer Gallatin is undertaking another project to log nearly 9 square miles of wildlife habitat and plow over 15 miles of roads into the buffalo's winter range and spring calving grounds." Yellowstone's bison are a candidate species for listing as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

In addition to impacting wild bison - which are nowhere mentioned in Forest Service's sparse documentation of the proposal - the roadbuilding, logging, and burning will occur in or near habitat for a wide diversity of threatened wildlife species, including grizzlies, lynx, and wolverines. According to a recent report, wildlife populations have already been reduced by an average of 80% in just the past 50 years, in large part due to habitat destruction and degradation like SPLAT.

This staggering decline in wildlife populations is, in part, attributable to mismanagement of public wildlands by agencies like the Forest Service. As Nez Perce environmental scientist James Holt, who serves as BFC's Executive Director, points out: "According to the Forest Service - who we must remember are paid by our tax dollars, and not by the timber industry - this intensive logging, burning and road-building of 32 square miles of habitat in the Yellowstone Ecosystem, some of the best wildlife habitat in the world, is insignificant and will not give rise to any adverse environmental impacts for the public to be concerned about!"

The Forest Service is not planning to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to examine the cumulative impacts of the two projects, which is what federal law requires anytime a project has the potential to adversely impact wildlife, water quality, soils, the climate, or the human environment.

Prescribed burns proposed in SPLAT are of particular concern to the Buffalo Field Campaign, according to Geist. "The Custer Gallatin intends to use fire near Highway 20, where a buffalo was killed just last week in a vehicle collision. What we have learned from 25 years in the field," Geist continued, "is fire draws buffalo to new grass the following spring, during calving season. The National Forest appears unaware it is creating a hazard for buffalo and drivers alike by burning along highways."

Recent collisions on Highways 20 and 191 have resulted in the deaths of 4 bison, 4 moose, and a grizzly, according to BFC Communications Director Tom Woodbury. "What the public deserves is to have our Forest and Park Service experts spending their time and resources devising strategies for diverting wildlife away from death traps," Woodbury said, "not continuing to create new death traps."

BFC is encouraging people to send comments to the Forest Service opposing SPLAT, or at least demanding the kind of careful environmental impact analysis and concern that Yellowstone's wildlife merit.

According to the Park Service, the total amount of large mammals struck inside the Park from 2017-2021 was 241. Outside the Park, according to insurance statistics, Montana is the worst state for animal collision fatalities, with 24.6 animal crash deaths per 1 million vehicles, and 43 human fatalities from animal crash deaths between 2009 and 2018. According to the Montana Department of Transportation, there were 10 fatalities in animal

involved crashes in 2020, the latest year such statistics are available.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. Thank you for protecting the habit and wildlife visitors flock to see and experience, in their protected habitats of Yellowstone Natioal Park.