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First name: Shari

Last name: Gilbertsen

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a former resident of the state of Montana, I want to go on record as being totally opposed to this destruction, for the following reasons:

1. The South Cottonwood wildlands characteristics must be

protected. No active forest management of any kind should be permitted.

2. South Cottonwood was proposed for logging in the 1990s. The

federal government (taxpayers) purchased checkerboard sections of land in the drainage to preclude logging by the FS and the Plum Creek timber company. The initiative aimed to preserve the wilderness quality of the South Cottonwood drainage so it could one day be designated wilderness.

Any "active forest management" (i.e. logging, thinning, or prescribed

burning) would jeopardize future wilderness designation and is contrary to the original intent of the preservation effort.

3. Contrary to FS assertion, active forest management won't

prevent large wildfires under extreme fire weather conditions.

4. A wildfire's probability of encountering any treatment is very

low, usually less than 1%. So the chance any management will prevent a high-severity blaze is small, but we get all the negatives from management including roading, spread of weeds, disturbance of wildlife, loss of carbon storage (in the trees removed), and disruptions of recreational use.

GALLATIN FOREST PARTNERSHIP SHOULD BE OPPOSED

The Gallatin Forest Partnership is a collective effort to designate recreational zones in the Gallatin Range.

Unfortunately, the proposal would dramatically reduce the range's wilderness designation potential from 250,000 acres to approximately 100,000 acres. The GFP proposes eliminating the Buffalo Horn and Porcupine drainages adjacent to Yellowstone National Park from wilderness designation. These drainages are critical for grizzly bear,

elk migration, bighorn sheep, moose, and other wildlife.

MONTANA CONSERVATION ELDERS SUPPORTS GYWA PROPOSAL

The Montana Conservation Elders, which includes several former Montana Wilderness Association presidents and other activists, support our efforts to protect a 250,000-acre Gallatin Range wilderness.

--- University of Duisburg-Essen

Ms. Shari Gilbertsen

Service-Büro für englischsprachige Texte Faculty of Humanities Universitätsstr. 12

45117 Essen