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First name: Cathy

Last name: Shill

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Mr. Chad Hudson

Forest Supervisor Bridger Teton National Forest

340 N. Cache Street

Jackson, WY 83001

Dear Supervisor Hudson,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Bridger Teton Draft Assessment (DA) and the Special Assessment (SA). I am submitting this as my personal view. I have lived and recreated in the BTNF for 40 years. It is my home. I have made my living sharing the land, increasing awareness by connecting people to the landscape. It is an honor to share nature and the beauty of the BTNF. I believe in management of the land to protect native species and to find balance for all who wish to spend time in the BTNF. I applaud the forest's efforts to review the forest and update the plan. I am grateful for all the time and effort to share such a comprehensive assessment.

I understand this is an evolving process. I appreciate the planning meetings and look forward to more public meetings and involvement. I have shared some input below that I would like to have included for consideration.

Chapter 2-

Fire data is presented throughout the plan (chapter 3, SA, and in the open houses). With current ecological changes and the urban/forest interface, fire should be managed as part of the ecology of the GYE. Wildland fire is its own entity and ecologically impactful so managing fire independently seems essential. Not as being "influenced" by current described stressors such as climate change, insects, human impacts, and invasives.

Connectivity- (and SA- chapter 2/ pg 45- animal migrations.) Three migration corridors are mentioned (Sublette Mule Deer, Sublette Pronghorn and Wind River Pronghorn) but no mention of other species. I feel information on all mule deer migration corridors, elk, moose, and bighorn sheep should be included. Information about animal migration and trends provided by the USGS big-game migration data should be included. Including impacts from energy development and management and how animal migration and populations are affected. I feel the draft assessment should incorporate all data -WGFD, USGS, Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit- to create a better comprehensive plan and sufficiently represent migration corridors for all species. Developments and changes that negatively impact wildlife migration should be limited.

Please continue management for a healthy and productive ecosystem protecting wildlife and the fisheries. Land should be managed to provide critical habitat for endangered and threatened species. I find Table 22/pg 145 of the SA confusing. No critical habit or recovery plan for some of the listed species? Is that the template for future management? Having explained in more detail would be helpful.

Chapter 3-

Recreation is the primary way people connect with the BTNF. (Chapter 3/ Recreation, lands and access and SA pg 313) Recreation must be well-managed to protect the natural and social qualities that underpin quality visitor experiences. With the rapidly changing nature of recreation, sustainability is a major concern. Recreation use and trends have been on the rise since 1990. More management is needed on the land. How will this be addressed? Volunteers? Partnering with outfitters/ forest partners? Many people don't know how to behave when recreating. How to share the message of stewardship and leave no trace, to protect water quality, wildlife and habitat?

Challenges ahead

How to get the community involved at a deeper level to help with invasive species, trail awareness to reduce impacts (spur trails, tread lightly, etiquette to other users, wildlife disturbance, bear country)

With increased visitation and use of forest trails, the BTNF is fortunate to be vast and part of the 22-million-acre Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). Yes, it is best to keep concentration of people in the urban/forest interface and those of us that live near busy trails have seen the changes. Please protect the integrity of our trails and levels of use. Increasing motorized options needs to be well planned and managed for safety, user conflict, wildlife disturbance and protection of the resource. Being within the GYE gives access to motorized trails on the Targhee-Caribou National Forest which can help reduce the need for more motorized access.

Wintering Wildlife- How will increased use be managed? How monitored? As plan is created, address current trends on winter wildlife closures and violations to protect wildlife populations throughout the year. Consider changes in technology as people can go further and faster.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. This plan will affect this land for years to come. I hope for sufficient funding and support from the government to protect the land for all species and to give the forest managers the tools and staff to make this revision a huge success. I appreciate everyone's time and energy. It's special land.