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Comments: I do not find that the draft assessment as currently written provides an adequate foundation on which to build a high-quality new forest management plan. In my opinion, this draft assessment omits or gives inadequate attention to several important areas, and these deficiencies should be corrected.

As I am sure you are aware, the Forest Service is required to evaluate the level of recreational activity and other conditions that that existed in 1984 when the Palisades Wilderness Study Area was established, and to regulate recreational activity in the Palisades and Shoal Creek wilderness study areas so that activity today does not exceed the levels that were occurring in 1984. I see no mention of this essential, legal requirement in the draft assessment, an oversight that clearly must be corrected.

Climate change and recreational impacts are acknowledged as major stressors, but I see no detail as to how the Forest Service is currently addressing or responding to these very real and growing problems in the draft assessment. The Forest Service needs to include all relevant data and information on changes occurring as a result of climate change and current recreational use and its impacts, to lay a strong foundation for a new forest plan that will appropriately protect wildlife habitat and other critical resource values under increasing pressure from a changing climate and ever-growing recreational demands.

Chronic wasting disease is present and spreading in this ecosystem, and was documented on at least two winter feedgrounds on the Bridger Teton National Forest in the past year. Unbelievably, the draft assessment does not mention this threat to ungulate populations in northwestern Wyoming. The role of artificial feeding on the prevalence and rate of spread of chronic wasting disease is well documented and understood by wildlife professionals, yet the draft assessment provides zero information or discussion of elk feedground permitting on the forest.

The draft assessment does not include all currently available science on ungulate migration from all sources, including data published by the U.S. Geological Survey, and does not recognize current peer-reviewed research on elk, mule deer, moose, and pronghorn antelope migration corridors and routes. These resources must be included and discussed in the assessment.

Across the board, the draft assessment includes almost no supporting data for many of its contentions, making it impossible to evaluate. More detailed information with supporting data is essential for the public to be able to meaningfully respond and participate.