

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/2/2026 3:12:31 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Please consider the following comments:

1.The agency underrepresents its analysis of impacts to the human environment associated with the project area. The Bear Creek area provides an important and accessible area with wilderness-like characteristics for the community of Gardiner. It is an escape from the popular Yellowstone National Park. It provides a place where residents can recreate that is a reprieve from the high-volume visitation of the park. The proposed commercial actions for units along the bear creek road and pine creek loop (Units 27, 29, 31, 33-39, 63-64, 77, 219, 414, 417-418) would substantively reduce the wild character of this area and the resource it provides to residents seeking accessible wilderness-like experience. The analysis by the agency does not sufficiently capture impacts to the wild character of this area and its importance to the community as a recreational reprieve. Please including an evaluation of the change to the wild character of the area and its impact to community members seeking these areas as an accessible reprieve. Please include an alternative that for the following units (27, 29, 31, 33-39, 63-64, 77, 219, 414, 417-418) does not include clear cutting or group selection, limits commercial thinning, limits mechanical thinning to a twenty foot corridor from the road edge, and prioritizes non-mechanical thinning. Please include if the following alternative meets the need and purpose of the proposed action and include evaluation of impacts to wild character of the area and the intrinsic value to people of the community as a recreation area.

2.The agency underrepresents its analysis of impacts to recreation in the area. Beyond the impacts listed in the preliminary assessment, such as effects to winter recreation along the bear creek ski trails, please evaluate the impact of the proposed actions on changing recreational use patterns. Please evaluate the effects of the proposed clear cuts and group selection throughout the area in increasing snowmobile use of recently cleared terrain. Increased snowmobile use would directly and negatively affect the recreational experience of skiers on the town's ski trail through rutting, noise, and inability to keep the trail groomed. The ski trail along the bear creek road is an important resource to the community, with the agency providing grooming service via volunteers. The resulting trails have supported town recreationists for decades, the Jardine Ski Race, and training opportunities for the Gardiner ski team. Maintaining the trail, which supports some snow mobile use in its current condition is an effort supported and implemented by members of the community to support the community. The proposed actions hold potential to significantly reduce the ski trail from its current condition. Please evaluate an alternative that removes clear cutting and group selection from units along the bear creek road, pine creek loop, bear fork road, and ash mountain road and prioritizes commercial thinning, mechanical thinning, and non-mechanical thinning in these units. In that evaluation, please indicate if limiting the types of harvest to this subset would still meet the need and purpose of the proposed action and consider if limiting types of harvest in these units would have a similar impact on changing recreation patterns.

3.Please consider that the fire history of the area and most recent triggers have come from recreation along the eagle creek and bear creek roads including dispersed car-camping overnight. This dispersed camping has resulted in construction of fire rings which has supported more fires and, in turn, more unattended and improperly cared for fires. Numerous community members have taken it upon themselves to patrol the eagle and bear creek roads in the mornings to put out unattended fires. The Yellowstone National Park Fire crew also regularly patrols these roads when fire conditions are more severe. Please evaluate an alternative that prohibits fires in units 96 and 98, as well as the entire bear creek road between eagle creek campground and the town of Jardine. Eliminating these recreational fires would meet the need and purpose of the plan to reduce fire risk to the town of Jardine, as fires started in this area would have high potential to travel towards the town of Jardine. In a second alternative, please evaluate the effectiveness of also prohibiting roadside fires along the eagle creek road from

the campground to mile 4 because a fire start in that area also has high potential for moving towards the town of Jardine based on prevailing wind and topography.

4. Please evaluate the cumulative effects of this proposed action, along with other proposed actions or reasonable foreseeable actions for logging in the Custer-Gallatin and all adjacent forests in the grizzly bear recovery area. Please provide an analysis of the cumulative effects of these actions on grizzly bear, lynx, and wolverine habitat. While this action alone represents a small area, about 4,000 acres, it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of the agency's evaluation in light of all ongoing, proposed or reasonable foreseeable logging actions. At minimum, please articulate the size and scope of all other logging actions for forest health, commercial, fire protection, or any other rationale in this area in the effects document, indicating acreage and project timeframe. Please also provide a map of all ongoing or reasonably foreseeable actions to allow evaluation of impacts to habitat connectivity for these species.

5. Please provide analysis of effects of the proposed action on neighboring properties in the town of Jardine and between Gardiner and Jardine, including volume of truck traffic, changes in road condition from increased truck traffic, dust affecting residents, and noise from logging. Please evaluate these effects and consider an alternative where commercial actions are limited to the Eagle creek road area where many of these effects would not impact the community of Jardine. Please at minimum provide an estimate of the volume of truck traffic in terms of vehicles per day and type of vehicle, and effects on road condition involved with the proposed action. Please consider and evaluate mitigation measures for the bear creek units including limiting truck volume, time of day of operation, and potential dust mitigation measures.