



June 5, 2019

Comments on the Draft Plan/DEIS for the Custer Gallatin National Forest

To Custer Gallatin National Forest Planners,

The Custer Gallatin Forest is a special place to all Montanans. It is important to protect as much wilderness as possible outside of Yellowstone National Park. As the human population of Montana grows and the number of visitors to our state increases exponentially, it is harder and harder to find places of solitude and quiet that are needed in our frantic lives. In addition, wildlife finds refuge in wild places as more habitat is gobbled up by human development. Likewise, wildlands enhance connectivity between populations of wildlife species that are threatened with the consequences of climate change.

The Board of Directors of the North Fork Preservation Association has authorized me to send the following recommendations for the Forest Plan:

1. Prohibit both motorized travel and mechanized recreation transport (including mountain biking) in recommended Wilderness by managing it as though it was designated Wilderness in order to protect the wilderness values.
2. Protect existing recommended Wilderness surrounding the **Absaroka Beartooths and include Dome Mountain, Chico Peak, Emigrant Peak, West Woodbine, East Rosebud to Stillwater, and Red Lodge Creek.**
3. Protect existing recommended Wilderness in the **Lionhead.**
4. Protect the Pryors as recommended Wilderness, especially **Lost Water, Big Pryor, Punch Bowl, and Bear Canyon.**
5. Protect the **Bridger/Bangtail/Crazy Mountains** for wildlife connectivity, particularly for bears, wolverine, and lynx. Wilderness is the best tool for protecting connectivity.

The North Fork Preservation Association supports the collaborative work and recommendations of the Gallatin Forest Partnership. However, we think that more recommended Wilderness is needed, specifically in the **Porcupine Buffalo Horn, Hidden Lakes, South Cottonwood and West Pine areas.**

NFPA supports the designation of additional rivers for Wild and Scenic River eligibility in the Forest Plan. However, we think that additional rivers are deserving of eligibility, including **the Taylor Fork, Porcupine Creek and Hellroaring Creek.**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Sincerely,

Debo Powers,
NFPA President