

Summary

Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Draft Revised Forest Plan

Custer Gallatin National Forest



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Summary of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Draft Revised Forest Plan Custer Gallatin National Forest

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Abstract: This document is a summary of the draft environmental impact statement that discloses the effects of revising the Custer and Gallatin National Forest forest plans, which were developed in the 1980s. The proposed action is to provide revised management direction in one forest plan now that the two national forests are administratively managed as one unit (the Custer Gallatin National Forest).

The environmental impact statement contains analysis of five forest plan alternatives developed for the programmatic management of approximately 3,039,000 acres administered by the Custer Gallatin National Forest. The draft environmental impact statement was developed in accordance with the 2012 National Forest System Land Management Planning Rule adopted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The decision to approve the revised forest plan for the Custer Gallatin National Forest will be subject to the objection process identified in the Planning Rule at 36 CFR 219 Subpart B (219.50 to 219.62). Only those individuals and entities who have submitted substantive comments related to the Custer Gallatin National Forest plan revision during the opportunities provided for public comment will be eligible to file an objection (36 CFR 219.52(a)).

Electronic comments can be sent to:

<https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=50185>

Comments delivered by U.S. mail can be sent to:

Custer Gallatin National Forest Supervisor's Office, 10 East Babcock, Bozeman, MT 59715.

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Introduction

The U.S. Forest Service has prepared a draft environmental impact statement that describes and analyzes in detail five alternatives for managing the land and resources of the Custer Gallatin National Forest. The draft environmental impact describes the affected environment and discloses the environmental consequences of the alternatives.

The draft environmental impact statement is a programmatic document. It discloses the broad environmental impacts and benefits of the proposed alternatives, in contrast to analyses conducted for site-specific projects. This document describes, in general terms, the expected effects of management during the plan period, but does not predict the site-specific effects of future speculative actions each time the standards and guidelines are implemented at the project level. Those site-specific effects would be disclosed in subsequent National Environmental Policy Act reviews during the implementation of individual projects.

Proposed Action

The Forest Service proposes to revise the 1986 and 1987 Custer and Gallatin land management plans in compliance with the National Forest System Land Management Planning Rule (USDA, 2012a) (36 CFR 219).

The Custer Gallatin National Forest defined six geographic areas for planning purposes. Figure 1 displays the geographic areas, and table 1 displays the acres of the national forest by geographic area.

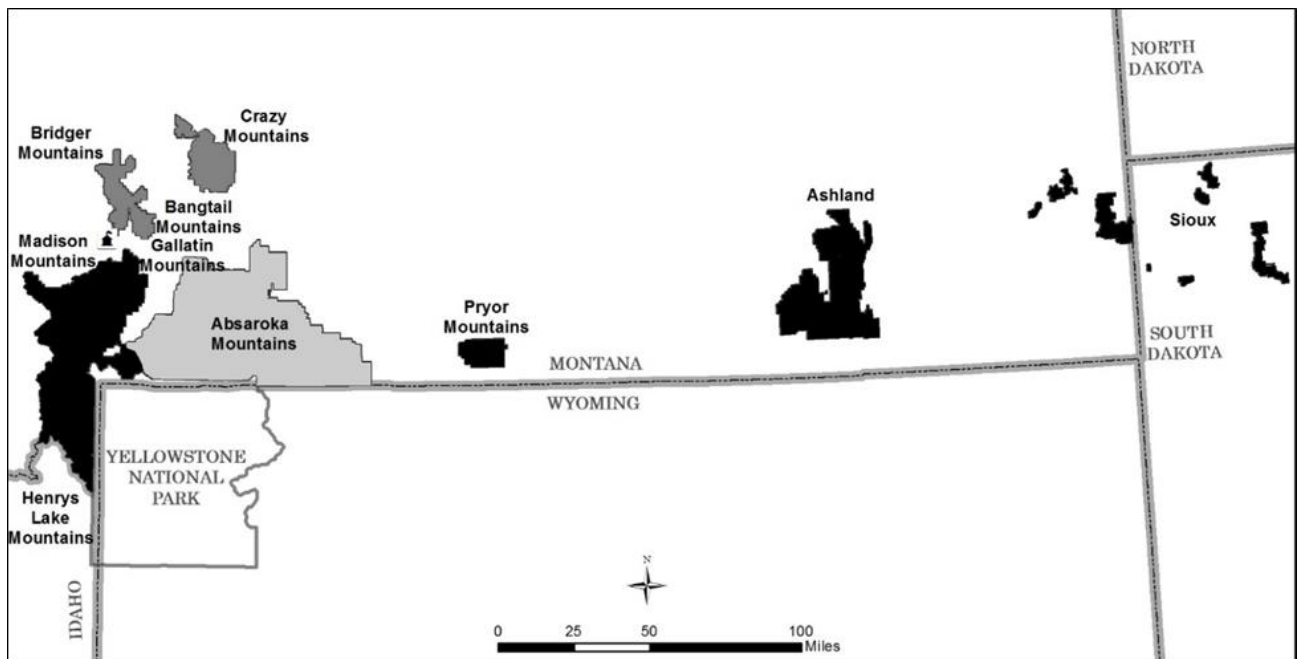


Figure 1. Custer Gallatin National Forest and vicinity

Table 1. Acres within the six geographic areas (GAs) on the Custer Gallatin National Forest

Geographic Area	Total Acres (All Ownerships)	National Forest System Acres within GA	Percent of GA in National Forest System Lands
Sioux	177,636	164,460	92
Ashland	501,798	436,124	87
Pryor Mountains	77,944	75,067	96
Absaroka Beartooth Mountains	1,387,824	1,353,295	93
Bridger, Bangtail, and Crazy Mountains	314,598	205,025	64
Madison, Henrys Lake, and Gallatin Mountains	952,813	805,299	85

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of the revised Custer Gallatin Land Management Plan is to revise the 1986 Custer and 1987 Gallatin Forest Plans and to provide an integrated set of plan direction for social, economic, and ecological sustainability, and multiple uses of the Custer Gallatin lands and resources.

In the 30 years since the current forest plans were developed: (1) the two national forests have been combined administratively to be managed as a single national forest, (2) demographics have shifted, (3) new threats have emerged, (4) new Forest Service planning regulations have been adopted, and (5) new laws and policies have been adopted. Four broad categories described below relate to the need to change. Taken together, the changes related to these four categories will result in substantial changes to the current plans. The Preliminary Need to Change the Existing Custer and Gallatin Forest Plans (February 2017) describes each category, with examples, in more detail.

Revision is also needed because the current plans are beyond the 10 to 15 year duration provided by the National Forest Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1606(e) (5) (A)).

Public Involvement

The Custer Gallatin forest plan revision process was publicly launched in January 2016. Key public involvement steps to date include the following:

- 2016: public launch; February 4th, 2016 Federal Register notice of initiation of the Assessment of Existing Conditions; public meetings in winter and summer; Intergovernmental Working Group webinars; release of Draft Assessment Report and draft topical reports for public review and feedback;
- 2017: release of Final Assessment Report and final topical reports; public meetings in spring and fall; Intergovernmental Working Group webinars; public feedback requested on the draft eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers and the Wilderness Inventory;
- 2018: Federal Register notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement on January 3, 2018 and release of proposed action for 60 day public scoping period (though March 5, 2018); public meetings in the proposed action comment period; preliminary range of alternatives focused on forest plan allocations shared with public; Intergovernmental Working Group webinars; a science symposium.

Issues

The following issues drove the development of alternatives:

- Different public desires for forest plan land allocations and the uses allowed in these allocations, such as recommended wilderness areas, backcountry areas or recreation emphasis areas. Improve the sufficiency of plan direction for wildlife, particularly bison, bighorn sheep and connectivity.
- Levels of timber harvest and timber production
- Public interest in higher or lower plan objectives
- Locations of aircraft landing strips

Alternatives

In addition to the no-action alternative (A) (often referred to as the current plans) and the proposed action (B), which was modified based on public and internal comments, three additional alternatives (C, D, and E) were developed based on the identified issues. The alternatives span the range of forest management practices and uses of available resources. The general theme and intent of each alternative is summarized below, in relationship to the issues that drove alternatives. A limited number of plan components vary by alternative.

All alternatives adhere to the principles of multiple use and the sustained yield of goods and services required by the Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR § 219.1 (b)). All alternatives are designed to:

- meet law, regulation, and policy;
- contribute to ecological, social, and economic sustainability;
- provide sustainable levels of products and services;
- provide integrated direction as included in the plan components;
- allow reasonable access and mineral development for private mineral rights (locatable mining claims, reserved and outstanding rights) and existing oil and gas leases on the national forest and consistent with subject laws and regulations;
- retain the existing decisions for the Northern Rockies Lynx Management direction and Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy direction;
- manage the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area consistent with the Montana Wilderness Study Act of 1977 (unless released by Congress) and the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule);
- retain all existing permitted activities and facilities;
- do not make oil and gas leasing decisions; and
- do not make minerals withdrawal decisions

In addition, under all revised plan alternatives:

- plan direction would be consistent with the 2012 Planning Rule and associated directives, and emphasize adaptive management and consider the best available scientific information;

- designations and plan components would remain constant for designated wilderness, the designated East Rosebud Wild and Scenic River; Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Territory; research natural areas; special areas; National Natural Landmarks; the Earthquake Lake Geologic Area; National Scenic, Historic, and Recreation Trails; and the Beartooth Highway;
- thirty eligible wild and scenic rivers and their plan components would remain constant;
- plan direction would be consistent with existing travel plans, except where suitability for motorized recreation and mechanized recreation varies by revised plan alternatives. Site specific travel decisions needed to bring travel plans into compliance with the revised forest plan would occur subsequent to the revised forest plan decision;
- plan components that provide the ecological conditions to support the persistence of species of conservation concern remain constant for revised plan alternatives.

Alternative A—No Action (the Current Plans)

Alternative A (also referred to as the current plans) reflects current direction under the 1986 and 1987 forest plans, as amended, and provides the basis for comparing alternatives to current management and levels of output. Alternative A is summarized as follows:

- There would continue to be seven recommended wilderness areas totaling about 34,000 acres and three low development areas totaling about 38,000 acres.
- Existing motorized and mechanized means of transport would continue to be allowed in all areas currently allowed. Mechanized recreation would continue to be allowed in the Lionhead recommended wilderness area.
- The current Gallatin Forest Plan, Gallatin Travel Plan, and inventoried roadless area direction would apply if the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area were released by Congress.
- Eleven eligible wild and scenic rivers would continue to be managed to protect identified outstandingly remarkable values, tentative classifications and free-flowing nature.
- Existing plans do not have any specific direction or language for bison, disease transmission to bighorn sheep from domestic sheep or goats, or connectivity.
- Lands suitable for timber production would be based on the 1986 and 1987 plans, with current regulation and policy. When consistent with other plan components, harvest for purposes other than timber production could occur on a subset of unsuitable lands.
- Objectives reflect a mix of resource enhancement, timber and wood products volume, hazardous fuel treatment, road, trail and facility maintenance, and new recreation facilities.
- Aircraft landing strips would be allowed in certain areas subject to Forest Service permitting.

Alternative B

Alternative B is based on the detailed proposed action that was published with the notice of intent in January 2018, with modifications in response to scoping comments and internal Forest Service review. Alternative B represents a mix of recommended wilderness areas, backcountry areas, recreation emphasis areas, and lands identified as suitable for timber production. Alternative B is summarized as follows:

- There would be nine recommended wilderness areas totaling nearly 114,000 acres; nine backcountry areas totaling about 125,000 acres; eight recreation emphasis areas totaling nearly 178,000 acres and a Stillwater Complex land allocation for minerals.
- Existing motorized and mechanized means of transport and use of existing commercial communication facilities would continue to be suitable uses in recommended wilderness areas. Uses such as existing or new use of cabins as recreation rentals, new recreation events such as races, and new commercial communication facilities would not be allowed in recommended wilderness areas.
- If the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area were released by Congress, portions of the wilderness study area would have land allocations of recommended wilderness area, backcountry area and recreation emphasis area; a portion would be managed under inventoried roadless area direction.
- To address potential disease transmission to native Bighorn Sheep, permitted use of domestic sheep or goats for livestock production and permitted or non-permitted recreational goat packing would be allowed only in limited areas and with mitigation techniques. Use of domestic sheep and goats for weed control would be allowed with mitigation techniques. Bison direction actively supports native habitat and access to year-round forage and presence on National Forest System lands. Key linkage areas are included for wildlife connectivity.
- Approximately 19 percent of the forest would be suitable for timber production and timber harvest would be allowed on an additional 19 percent of forestlands.
- Plan objectives reflect a mix of resource enhancement, moving toward forested vegetation desired conditions, timber and wood products volume, hazardous fuel treatment, road, trail and facility maintenance, and new recreation facilities.
- Aircraft landing strips would be allowed in certain areas subject to Forest Service permitting.

Alternative C

Alternative C also represents a mix of recommended wilderness areas, backcountry areas, recreation emphasis areas, and lands identified as suitable for timber production. The alternative reflects public input for land allocations and uses in a number of areas. Alternative C is summarized as follows:

- There would be nine recommended wilderness areas totaling about 146,500 acres; twelve backcountry areas totaling nearly 253,000 acres; eight recreation emphasis areas totaling nearly 209,000 acres and a Stillwater Complex land allocation for minerals.
- Motorized recreation and mechanized recreation use and continued use of existing commercial communication facilities would not be suitable in recommended wilderness areas. Uses such as new commercial communication facilities and new recreation events such as races would not be allowed

in recommended wilderness areas. The use of the Windy Pass cabin as a recreation rental would continue.

- If the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area were released by Congress, proposed land allocations for nearly all of the wilderness study area would include recommended wilderness area, backcountry area, and recreation emphasis area; a portion would be managed under inventoried roadless area direction.
- Plan direction for Bighorn Sheep, bison, and connectivity would be the same as in alternative B.
- Approximately 19 percent of the forest would be suitable for timber production and timber harvest would be allowed on an additional 19 percent of forestlands.
- Plan objectives reflect a mix of resource enhancement, moving toward forested vegetation desired conditions, timber and wood products volume, hazardous fuel treatment, road, trail and facility maintenance, and new recreation facilities.
- Aircraft landing strips would be allowed in certain areas subject to Forest Service permitting.

Alternative D

Alternative D was developed to address comments and themes of emphasizing natural processes and restoration. This alternative includes the greatest amount of recommended wilderness areas, higher objectives for restoration, and less land suitable for timber production. Alternative D is summarized as follows:

- There would be thirty nine recommended wilderness areas totaling over 711,000 acres; one backcountry area totaling nearly 6,000 acres; and four recreation emphasis areas totaling over 34,000 acres. There would be no Stillwater Complex land allocation for minerals, yet mining would continue in the area.
- Motorized recreation and mechanized recreation would not be suitable uses in recommended wilderness areas. Uses such as new recreation events, use of cabins as recreation rentals, and commercial communication facilities would not be allowed in recommended wilderness areas.
- If the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area were released by Congress, nearly the entire wilderness study area is proposed as recommended wilderness area.
- To address potential disease transmission to native Bighorn Sheep, permitted use of domestic sheep or goats for livestock production, permitted or non-permitted recreational goat packing, or use for weed control would not be allowed. Bison direction would actively support native habitat, access to year-round forage, and a year round self-sustaining bison population on the national forest. Key linkage areas are included for wildlife connectivity.
- Approximately 18 percent of the forest would be suitable for timber production and timber harvest would be allowed on an additional 8 percent of forestlands.
- Plan objectives would emphasize resource enhancement, moving toward forested vegetation desired conditions, hazardous fuel treatment, and moving toward wilderness character. Objectives would deemphasize road and trail maintenance, and new recreation facilities. This alternative proposes a lower timber and wood products volume.
- Aircraft landing strips would not be allowed on the national forest.

Alternative E

Alternative E was developed to address comments and themes of higher human presence and use of the national forest, additional recreation emphasis areas, increasing timber production from National Forest System lands, additional motorized and mechanized recreation opportunities, and not including any recommended wilderness areas. Alternative E is summarized as follows:

- There would be no recommended wilderness areas; two backcountry areas totaling over 173,000 acres; twelve recreation emphasis areas totaling over 213,000 acres; and a Stillwater Complex land allocation for minerals.
- There would be no loss of existing motorized or mechanized recreation trails or areas. Additional land would be available for motorized and mechanized recreation opportunity in the Buffalo Horn Backcountry Area, if the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area were released by Congress.
- If the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area were released by Congress, the entire wilderness study area would become a backcountry area, and additional land would be available for motorized and mechanized recreation opportunity.
- To address potential disease transmission to native Bighorn Sheep, permitted use of domestic sheep or goats for livestock production, weed control or recreational packing would be allowed with mitigation techniques. Bison direction does not seek to facilitate bison habitat improvement projects and aims to minimize impacts to livestock operations. Vegetation treatment projects and bison-livestock conflicts would favor livestock. Forestwide plan components address connectivity; this alternative does not include key linkage areas.
- Approximately 20 percent of the forest would be suitable for timber production and timber harvest would be allowed on an additional 20 percent of forestlands.
- Plan objectives would emphasize timber and wood products volume. The additional Forest Service funding needed to accomplish the higher timber volume would result in lower objectives for resource enhancement, hazardous fuel treatment, moving toward wilderness character, and road and trail maintenance.
- Aircraft landing strips would be allowed in certain areas subject to Forest Service permitting.

Comparison of Alternatives

Table 2 through table 8 compare alternatives by issue, first at the forestwide scale and then for each geographic area. Issues that are not applicable to a given geographic area are omitted from the table (for example, if no recommended wilderness areas are identified under any alternative, or if no trail use is affected under any alternative, those indicators are not listed for that geographic area). Some issues are not relevant to display at the geographic area scale, such as bison management and plan objectives. Acreages and mileages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 2. Forestwide comparison of issues by alternative

Issue	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Recommended wilderness number	7	9	9	39	0
Recommended wilderness acres	33,741	113,952	146,555	711,425	0
Backcountry area number	3	9	12	1	2
Backcountry area acres	38,414	125,090	252,896	5,937	173,266
Recreation emphasis area number	0	8	8	4	12
Recreation emphasis area acres	0	178,094	208,718	34,649	213,258
Stillwater complex acres	0	102,945	102,945	0	102,945
Miles motorized trail no longer available	0	0	4	172	0
Miles mechanized trail no longer available	0	0	20	256	0
Acres winter motorized recreation use no longer available	0	0	24,885	232,985	0
Forested acres suitable for timber production; percent Custer Gallatin National Forest	665,247 22%	582,338 19%	570,146 19%	553,950 18%	604,502 20%
Forested acres unsuitable for timber production but where timber harvest may occur for other purposes; percent Custer Gallatin National Forest	523,883 17%	592,261 19%	563,839 19%	246,127 8%	608,056 20%
Bison	No plan direction	Proactive bison support	Proactive bison support	Most proactive bison support	Less proactive bison support
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Permitted use of domestic sheep or goats (grazing or outfitting)	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Not allowed in Pryor, AB, or MHG GAs. Risk assessment elsewhere.	Not allowed in Pryor, AB, or MHG GAs. Risk assessment elsewhere.	Not allowed forestwide	Risk assessment
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Public use of recreational pack goats	No plan direction	Not suitable in Pryor, AB, or MGH GAs. Suitable elsewhere.	Not suitable in Pryor, AB, or MGH GAs. Suitable elsewhere.	Not suitable forestwide	Suitable forestwide
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Agency use of domestic sheep or goats for weed control	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Risk assessment	Risk assessment	Not allowed forestwide	Risk assessment
Connectivity	No plan direction	Plan components and key linkage areas	Plan components and key linkage areas	Plan components and key linkage areas	Plan components
Aircraft landing strip acres	1,021,650	937,310	907,300	0	938,591

GA = geographic area; AB=Absaroka Beartooth Mountains Geographic Area; MHG=Madison, Henrys Lake, and Gallatin Mountains Geographic Area

Table 3. Sioux Geographic Area (GA) comparison of issues by alternative

Issue	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Backcountry area number	0	0	0	1	0
Backcountry area acres	0	0	0	5,937	0
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Permitted use of domestic sheep or goats (grazing or outfitting)	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Risk assessment	Risk assessment	Not allowed	Risk assessment
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Public use of recreational pack goats	No plan direction	Suitable	Suitable	Not suitable	Suitable
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Agency use of domestic sheep or goats for weed control	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Risk assessment	Risk assessment	Not allowed	Risk assessment
Forested acres suitable for timber production; percent of GA	65,958 40%	59,859 36%	59,859 36%	57,519 35%	59,859 36%
Forested acres unsuitable for timber production but where timber harvest may occur for other purposes; percent of GA	1,107 1%	7,206 4%	7,206 4%	9,545 6%	7,206 4%
Aircraft landing strips acres	163,269	146,116	146,116	0	146,116

Table 4. Ashland Geographic Area (GA) comparison of issues by alternative

Issue	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Recommended wilderness number	0	0	0	3	0
Recommended wilderness acres	0	0	0	37,180	0
Backcountry area number	3	3	3	0	0
Backcountry area acres	38,414	38,414	38,414	0	0
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Permitted use of domestic sheep or goats (grazing or outfitting)	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Risk assessment	Risk assessment	Not allowed	Risk assessment
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Public use of recreational pack goats	No plan direction	Suitable	Suitable	Not suitable	Suitable
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Agency use of domestic sheep or goats for weed control	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Risk assessment	Risk assessment	Not allowed	Risk assessment
Forested acres suitable for timber production; percent of GA	196,123 45%	189,379 43%	189,379 43%	189,384 43%	189,529 43%
Forested acres unsuitable for timber production but where timber harvest may occur for other purposes; percent of GA	21,132 5%	27,877 6%	27,877 6%	8,956 2%	27,727 6%
Aircraft landing strips acres	402,557	386,487	373,587	0	386,487

Table 5. Pryor Mountains Geographic Area (GA) comparison of issues by alternative

Issue	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Recommended wilderness number	1	1	1	4	0
Recommended wilderness acres	6,804	6,804	6,804	43,861	0
Backcountry area number	0	3	3	0	0
Backcountry area acres	0	29,389	29,389	0	0
Miles motorized trail no longer available	0	0	4	5	0
Miles mechanized trail no longer available	0	0	6	6	0
Acres winter motorized recreation use no longer available	0	0	16,001	21,866	0
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Permitted use of domestic sheep or goats (grazing or outfitting)	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Risk assessment
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Public use of recreational pack goats	No plan direction	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Suitable
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Agency use of domestic sheep or goats for weed control	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Risk assessment	Risk assessment	Not allowed	Risk assessment
Forested acres suitable for timber production; percent of GA	32,888 44%	13,240 18%	13,240 18%	11,931 16%	28,635 38%
Forested acres unsuitable for timber production but where timber harvest may occur for other purposes; percent of GA	10,207 14%	26,945 36%	10,766 14%	6,267 8%	17,935 24%
Aircraft landing strips acres	49,489	44,149	29,587	0	44,347

Table 6. Absaroka Beartooth Mountains Geographic Area (GA) comparison of issues by alternative

Issue	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Recommended wilderness number	5	4	4	19	0
Recommended wilderness acres	6,163	2,238	2,238	214,247	0
Backcountry area number	0	1	1	0	0
Backcountry area acres	0	18,722	18,722	0	0
Recreation emphasis area number	0	3	3	1	4
Recreation emphasis area acres	0	37,940	37,940	6,681	48,020
Stillwater Complex acres	0	102,945	102,945	0	102,945
Miles motorized trail no longer available	0	0	0	52	0
Miles mechanized trail no longer available	0	0	0	91	0
Acres winter motorized recreation use no longer available	0	0	0	99,000	0
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Permitted use of domestic sheep or goats (grazing or outfitting)	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Risk assessment
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Public use of recreational pack goats	No plan direction	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Suitable
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Agency use of domestic sheep or goats for weed control	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Risk assessment	Risk assessment	Not allowed	Risk assessment
Forested acres suitable for timber production; percent of GA	96,744 7%	79,817 6%	79,817 6%	71,241 5%	85,737 6%
Forested acres unsuitable for timber production but where timber harvest may occur for other purposes; percent of GA	229,315 17%	249,976 18%	249,976 18%	97,434 7%	245,319 18%
Aircraft landing strips acres	171,971	154,782	154,782	0	155,181

Table 7. Bridger, Bangtail, Crazy Mountains Geographic Area (GA) comparison of issues by alternative

Issue	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Recommended wilderness number	0	0	0	3	0
Recommended wilderness acres	0	0	0	91,889	0
Backcountry area number	0	0	3	0	0
Backcountry area acres	0	0	115,625	0	0
Recreation emphasis area number	0	0	0	0	2
Recreation emphasis area acres	0	0	0	0	5,502
Miles motorized trail no longer available	0	0	0	30	0
Miles mechanized trail no longer available	0	0	0	36	0
Acres winter motorized recreation use no longer available	0	0	0	38,836	0
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Permitted use of domestic sheep or goats (grazing or outfitting)	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Risk assessment	Risk assessment	Not allowed	Risk assessment
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Public use of recreational pack goats	No plan direction	Suitable	Suitable	Not suitable	Suitable
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Agency use of domestic sheep or goats for weed control	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Risk assessment	Risk assessment	Not allowed	Risk assessment
Connectivity	No plan direction	Plan components and key linkage areas	Plan components and key linkage areas	Plan components and key linkage areas	Plan components
Forested acres suitable for timber production; percent of GA	59,027 29%	51,808 25%	44,118 22%	50,963 25%	51,806 25%
Forested acres unsuitable for timber production but where timber harvest may occur for other purposes; percent of GA	87,828 43%	95,049 46%	102,737 50%	40,038 20%	95,049 46%
Aircraft landing strips acres	98,040	87,001	87,001	0	87,182

Table 8. Madison, Henrys Lake, Gallatin Mountains Geographic Area (GA) comparison of issues by alternative

Issue	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Recommended wilderness number	1	4	4	10	0
Recommended wilderness acres	20,774	104,910	137,513	324,248	0
Backcountry area number	0	2	2	0	2
Backcountry area acres	0	38,565	50,745	0	173,266
Recreation emphasis area number*	0	5	5	3	6
Recreation emphasis area acres*	0	140,155	170,776	27,977	159,736
Miles motorized trail no longer available	0	0	0	84	0
Miles mechanized trail no longer available	0	0	14	122	0
Acres winter motorized recreation use no longer available	0	0	8,884	73,283	0
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Permitted use of domestic sheep or goats (grazing or outfitting)	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Risk assessment
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Public use of recreational pack goats	No plan direction	Not suitable	Not suitable	Not suitable	Suitable
Bighorn sheep disease prevention Agency use of domestic sheep or goats for weed control	No plan direction; risk assessment per policy.	Risk assessment	Risk assessment	Not allowed	Risk assessment
Connectivity	No plan direction	Plan components and key linkage areas	Plan components and key linkage areas	Plan components and key linkage areas	Plan components
Forested acres suitable for timber production; percent of GA	214,504 27%	188,237 23%	183,732 23%	172,911 21%	188,937 23%
Forested acres unsuitable for timber production but where timber harvest may occur for other purposes; percent of GA	174,294 22%	185,209 23%	165,278 21%	83,887 10%	214,820 27%
Aircraft landing strips acres	136,324	118,775	116,226	0	119,278

*The Yellowstone Recreation Emphasis Area is counted in this geographic area

Table 9 below summarizes the relative contributions of key Custer Gallatin benefits to social and economic sustainability by alternative. When relative contributions are expected to be similar, alternatives are listed in the same box in alphabetical order.

Table 9. Relative contributions to social and economic sustainability by alternative

Key Social Benefit from the Custer Gallatin	Relative Contributions				
	←				
	Greatest				Smallest
Clean air	E	ABCD			
Clean water, aquatic ecosystems, and flood control	D	C	B	E	*A
Conservation of ecosystems (lands, rare plants, and species for fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing)	D	C	B	E	A
Designated areas	BCDE	A			
Educational and volunteer programs	BCDE	A			
Employee service to communities	BCDE	A			
Fire suppression and fuels management	D	ABC			E
Forest products (including timber, firewood, Christmas trees, berries, mushrooms)	E	B	C	D	A
Permitted livestock grazing	A	E	B	C	D
Income (payments in lieu of taxes, secure rural schools, labor income in various industries: recreation, timber, grazing, etc.)	E	BC	D	A	
Infrastructure	ABC	E	D		
Inspiration (including spiritual inspiration)	BCD	A	E		
Jobs (and induced jobs, including recreation, timber, grazing, etc.)	E	BC	D	A	
Mineral and energy resources	A	E	B	C	D
Preservation of historic, cultural, tribal or archeological sites	D	C	B	E	A
Sustainable recreation	BCDE	A			
Scenery	D	C	B	A	E

*Alternative A represents the current plans in this table

Table 10 displays a range of objectives by alternative. The objectives for alternatives A, B, and C are based on the budget and accomplishments from 2014 through 2017. Alternatives D and E vary the objectives based on the theme of the alternative. In alternative E, the higher costs to accomplish the timber volume drive other objectives lower. The cumulative totals of all objectives in any alternative would be within the budgets from 2014 through 2017. Except where noted, partnership and external funds are not accounted for in the objectives.

Table 10. Objectives by alternative

Topic	Measure	Alternatives A, B, C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Streams	Miles restoration per decade	600	800	200
Lakes, Ponds, Wetlands	Acres restoration per decade	50	100	10
Aquatic Passage; Conversation Watershed Network priority	Number of projects installed per decade	5 to 7	7 to 10	1 to 3
Conversation Watershed Network roadway drainage erosion control enhancement	Road miles per year	5 to 8	5 to 8	5 to 8
At-risk aquatic species	Number of enhancement projects per decade	5 to 7	8 to 10	1 to 3
At-risk plants	Number of enhancement projects per decade	2	3	1
At Risk Wildlife	Number of enhancement projects per decade	3 to 7	8 to 10	1 to 2
Terrestrial Wildlife	Number of enhancement projects per decade	10	12	5
Bison	Number of enhancement projects every three years	1	3	0
Grizzly Bears	Number of potential relocation sites by 2022	5	7	3
Noxious weeds	Acres treated per year	2,500 to 4,500	4,500 to 7,000	500 to 2,500
Cultural Resources	Number of public outreach projects per year	10	5	5
Cultural Resources	Percent priority assets managed per year	20	25	20
Permitted Grazing	Animal Units Months (AUMs) per year	219,300	213,800	213,800
Projected Timber Sale Quantity (PTSQ) PTSQ does not include salvage harvest	Million board feet per year (mmbf)	10	6	15
	Million cubic feet per year (mmcf)	1.9	1.2	2.9
Projected Wood Sale Quantity (PWSQ)	Million board feet per year (mmbf)	18	13	25
	Million cubic feet per year (mmcf)	3.9	2.9	5.3
Projected Vegetation Treatment (fuels and timber)	Acres per year	6,000 to 7,500	8,000	5,000
Hazardous fuels	Acres treated per year	6,000	7,000	4,000
Natural unplanned wildfire	Acres per decade	375,000	375,000	375,000
Aspen, Whitebark, etc. Vegetation Treatment	Projects per decade	5 to 8	8 to 10	2
	Acres per decade	600 to 750	800	500
Roads - high clearance	Percent maintained per year	20	5	10 Priority timber access
Roads - passenger	Percent maintained per year	75	75	75

Topic	Measure	Alternatives A, B, C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Roads - removal	Miles removed per decade (40 miles left on national forest)	40	40	40
Trails	Percent maintained to standard per year	30	30	30 Priority front country
Trails	Percent maintained per year	80	30	30
Facilities (admin)	Percent maintained per year	60	40	40
Recreation Sites/Facilities in riparian management zone	Number removed per decade	5	7	2
Wilderness and recommended wilderness boundaries near adjacent motorized settings	Number boundary areas signed per decade	5	20	2
Existing travel incursions in P ROS	Number incursions eliminated per decade	5	5	2
Existing unauthorized motorized travel incursions in SPNM ROS	Number incursions eliminated per decade	5	0	5
Recreation Site Accessible Design in RN ROS	Number sites accessibility improved per decade	3	1	3
Designated Wilderness. Unneeded existing improvements, facilities or uses	Number removed per decade	3	3	3
Hyalite REA Day Use Access Sites	Number added per decade*	1	0	2
Hebgen Lakeshore REA Dispersed sites	Number converted to larger campgrounds per decade*	1	0	2
Road/Trail ROW	Number acquired per decade	1 to 5	1 to 5	1 to 5 Priority timber access

*Recreation emphasis area additional facilities depend on competitive Capital Improvement Project funds and external funds