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Comments

Having moved to the Greater Yellowstone Region three years ago after visiting on numerous vacation trips, I am deeply concerned about the future management of the six national forests surrounding Yellowstone & Grand Teton National Parks---& the wildlife inhabitants of those areas. The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is truly one of the last preserves for wilderness and the large predators who depend upon its existence for their survival. I am also concerned that the new forest plans fully comply with the National Forest Management Act, the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, and other federal laws and regulations. Very recently, it has been disturbing to see wolves removed from the protection of the Endangered Species Act; in fact, it is still hard to believe that it has happened.

I appreciate the fact that the proposed Rule includes some good ideas and concepts that should be retained. However, I believe that many of the ideas and concepts from Alternatives B, D, and E should be incorporated in the final Rule. By doing so the new Rule will be scientifically sound, and it will protect wildlife, wildlands, water quality, and recreational opportunities. Specifically the new forest planning Rule must include the following requirements:

- 1: Decision makers must use, not just account for or consider, the best available science in how our national forests will be managed when developing individual forest plans.
- 2: The perpetuation and protection of species diversity, including plant, vertebrate animal, and non-vertebrate animal species, by combining the comprehensive requirements spelled out in § 219.19 of the 1982 Rule and the more protective provisions from § 219 of Alternatives D and E in the DEIS for the language in the proposed Rule.
- 3: Each forest plan must include science-based standards and guidelines for the protection of all forest resources. Such a commitment to science-based standards and guidelines will ensure clear direction and accountability for future forest plans.
- 4: Commodity production such as mining, logging, energy production, and grazing should always be secondary to conservation and must remain subservient to the primary objectives of managing national forest lands for clean water, carbon sequestration, air filtration, water storage, soils and so forth.

Particularly in regards to 3. & 4., above, it was disturbing to take the Chief Joseph Highway last fall (October 2010) toward Sunlight Basin & see forested areas devastated right along the road! It clearly looks like a logging operation, the scale of which I have no information on---but the resulting landscape is a wretched version of its former glory---that much I can clearly see & understand! Whoever has been given the rights & permission to "harvest" these trees has no concern for the aftermath. Is that the legacy we want our fellow citizens to see as they drive by, wondering what commercial logging operations are doing in a national forest region? It's disgusting and should not be allowed any further; please do not permit any further logging to occur in these six national forests. If nothing else, why haven't beetle-kill trees been harvested? It would provide money for forest re-investment, etc.

Isn't it bad enough to see the beetle damage? If you personally have not driven into Yellowstone via the East Entrance, then you have not witnessed what is happening to Sylvan Pass. It doesn't take my degree in English Literature to know that "sylvan" means "green", "verdant", etc. The lush sylvan beauty of the evergreens covering those mountainsides is vanishing, leaving behind thousands of silver-gray skeletons. Those trees have become

nothing but a huge fire hazard. What specifically is in the new Rule that anticipates the onslaught of these beetles? What plans are being made to attack the beetles before they continue to devastate large tracts of national forests inside and outside the boundaries of the national parks? Those trees are extremely important to every inhabitant, from the birds to the grizzlies.

I also want to make clear that I am not against mining, logging, energy production, or grazing; however, care has to be taken to preserve & protect what we are the caretakers and stewards over. We preside over the future right now. Our decisions---whether careless & short-sighted, or based upon careful "pause & reflect"---will impact future generations as well as every acre of wilderness and its every inhabitant who has the God-given right to thrive there.

I know that compromising is a valuable tool that attempts to accommodate everyone involved; however, some things in this world should not be compromised. Wilderness, including the wildlife inhabiting the six national forests surrounding Grand Teton & Yellowstone National Parks, should not be subject to further development. It should be kept as pristine as possible to remind us of the grandeur of Nature & of the Earth. We are very lucky to have these bountiful natural resources in the United States. Let's not allow them to be taken for granted. Let's make sure the new Rule incorporates the Spirit of the Law as well as the Letter of the Law.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter; your taking the time to read this is greatly appreciated.

Individual(s)

Organization Type	Individual
Organization	
Email Address	tlewiswatts@bresnan.net
Title	
Name	TERESA LEWIS WATTS
Address 1	3229 ROSEBUD DRIVE #12
Address 2	
City	BILLINGS
State	MONTANA
Zip	59102
Country	UNITED STATES
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