



Custer Gallatin National Forest



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News Release

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Final Revised Land Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement Available for Custer Gallatin National Forest

Bozeman, MT – July 9, 2020 - Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service released the draft record of decision for the Custer Gallatin National Forest’s final revised land management plan and final environmental impact statement (EIS). The revised plan and environmental impact statement is the product of four-plus years of interactive collaborative effort across the Custer Gallatin National Forest working with communities and those that utilize these National Forest to provide the best possible vision and final land management plan moving forward.

“The Final Land Management is a culmination of the dedicated time of hundreds of people, from employees in their associated fields of expertise, to invested members of the public offering feedback, to collaborative groups working across the state and across multiple interests to find a compromise that supports the long-term resource needs and the best overall public benefit,” said Forest Supervisor Mary Erickson.

The final revised plan highlights the potential for over 200 new jobs to the region and approximately 10 million in additional labor income. The plan will also help set priorities for investments that support work with state partners, Tribes, communities and stakeholders to achieve active landscape management, vegetation and wildlife conservation, and help maintain sustainable mining, grazing, forest products and recreation industries. The plan details the desired conditions, standards, guidelines and objectives that would provide the foundation of future management activities across the forest for the next 10 to 15 plus years.

The plan includes active management to improve forest conditions, while providing for clean air, water, and forest products. Management direction is updated for all plant and wildlife species and Key Linkage areas contribute to the role of connectivity within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and across our broader landscape. The land management plan also recognizes the role of naturally-ignited fires on the landscape and encourages them to be used as a tool to improve forest conditions and protect communities from catastrophic wildfires. The land management plan recommends approximately 126,675 acres be added to recommended wilderness areas and an approximate 208,960 acres as backcountry areas. Approximately 224,610 acres are highlighted as Recreation Emphasis areas, given high public interest. This mix of land uses reflects the vast spectrum of public comment; while acknowledging local collaboration and County government support and involvement in the development of the plan.

The Forest hosted over 98 meetings and webinars across the Forest throughout the four-year process and strived to provide an inclusive and transparent process with partners and the communities we serve who could be affected by the plan.



The final environmental impact statement analyzes the environmental, social and economic effects of the proposed land management plan and lays out several alternatives. The draft record of decision describes the selected alternative, which will become the land management plan.

A 60-day objection period begins with the publication of the Notice of Opportunity to Object in the Federal Register. The objection process provides an opportunity for those who have participated in the process to have their unresolved concerns reviewed prior to the Forest Supervisor issuing a final decision. The reviewing official for the land management plan is Northern Regional Forester Leanne Marten. The 60-day objection period begins with the publication of the legal notice in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, Billings Gazette and Rapid City Journal paper of record, expected on July 9, 2020.

All project documents are available electronically, including instructions on how-to object on the [Forest Plan Revision website](#). Master hardcopies are available for reference by appointment only at local ranger district offices or by thumb drive.

Objection or resolution-centered meetings will be announced upon the determination of objection standing and information will be forthcoming late fall 2020. The objection process also includes an interested persons format for those interested in how objections are resolved. Interested persons includes any party not named in the objection and individuals who submitted substantive formal comments demonstrating their participation in the planning process. Information for filing as an interested person is available online at: www.fs.usda.gov/custergallatin, click on Forest Plan Revision. Final documents, maps, how-to and archived information is also available online.

For more information, contact Mariah Leuschen-Lonergan at 406-587-6735.

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