

American Rivers · Greater Yellowstone Coalition · Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance · National Parks Conservation Alliance · Teton Backcountry Alliance · The Wilderness Society · Winter Wildlands Alliance · Wyoming Outdoor Council · Wyoming Wilderness Association

Vicki Christiansen
Chief
U.S. Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250-0003

Dear Chief Christiansen:

The undersigned organizations have an interest in the Forest Plan Revision for the Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF).

As you know, the BTNF is one of the nation's premier national forests and plays a critical role in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The BTNF contains the headwaters of the Yellowstone, Snake and Green Rivers which provide water to millions of Americans and is critical habitat to native fish and aquatic life. The BTNF is adjacent to two of our nation's most popular national parks, Grand Teton and Yellowstone and provides habitat to many wildlife species including grizzly bears, wolverines, bison and some of the nation's largest big game herds. Additionally, some of the wildest lands in the lower 48 are on the BTNF including three wilderness areas – the Bridger, Teton and Gros Ventre. Finally, the BTNF is a working landscape that provides important natural resources for agriculture and industry.

Our groups have been working together toward a shared vision for the BTNF with the expectation that the BTNF was preparing to commence forest planning. To date, there is no firm start date for the forest. The 1990 BTNF Plan is woefully out of date. Contemporary challenges such as the management of big game migrations and seasonal habitat, increasing demands for recreation and energy development are examples of issues revised forest planning needs to address. The outdated 1990 Plan is out of touch with modern day challenges. Many of our groups have invested significantly in inventories and data collection to assist the Forest in pre-planning and assessment. As the Biden Administration moves forward, we encourage you to prioritize and adequately fund the BTNF planning efforts with the goal of completing a revised BTNF Forest Plan during your tenure in office.

We fear that further delays in prioritizing the BTNF revision start will result in a loss of momentum with current on-the-ground active engagement and investment in data collection.

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Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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Cc:

Secretary Vilsack, US Department of Agriculture
Mary Farnsworth, USDA Forest Service Region 4, Regional Forester
BTNF Forest Supervisor, Patricia O'Connor