

## **\*\* 30-Year Human Use Trends in the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness**

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Visitation in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) has significantly increased in recent years. Visitor-use data, such as National Park gate counts and agency campground occupancy numbers, confirms this observation. Several studies are investigating the extent and implications of use at road-side recreational facilities where this pattern is most obvious. However, due to the difficulty of tracking visitor activities in remote areas, little has been reported on changes in backcountry human use. Approximately 26% of the GYE is designated or proposed Wilderness. It is assumed that this landscape is also experiencing an increase in visitor use. To address this data gap, our objective is to assess changes in visitor use in the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness (ABW) using the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) monitoring framework. This monitoring tool tracks human use by recording the distribution of campsites and human-caused resource impacts at each site. We capitalize on these data which have been collected over the past 30-years at over 1,500 sites in the ABW. We used trends and modeling efforts to determine that overall, human impacts have declining over the last 30 years in the ABW. These findings can inform managers regarding educational programs and regulations targeting wilderness-users in the ABW and, potentially, other Wilderness areas in the GYE.