



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Region One

Jenn Dice and Drew Vankat
International Mountain Bicycling Association
P.O. Box 7578
Boulder, CO 80306

Dear Ms. Dice and Mr. Vankat:

This is in response to your letter dated April 26, 2007, regarding management of recommended wilderness in the Forest Service Northern Region.

I have been briefed about the Northern Region's approach to management of recommended wilderness and support this approach. If it is determined, through our forest planning process which includes extensive public involvement, that an area will be recommended to Congress for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, then we need to maintain the wilderness characteristics that justify the recommendation. In making this determination, along with the wilderness characteristics we also consider existing and potential uses of the area. In some cases, areas are not recommended because of well established non-conforming uses.

However, in areas that we do recommend, along with maintaining the wilderness characteristics, I generally believe we should not allow non-compatible uses to become established or to expand before U.S. Congress has an opportunity to address our recommendations. The final decision to implement a new legal closure for motorized and mechanized recreation will occur through a separate travel plan decision. Closures currently in place and authorized by past decisions can be carried forward when forest plans are revised.

In talking with Forest and Grassland Supervisors, it is my understanding that community members representing a variety of interests, including mountain biking, are working very hard with the Forest Service field units and each other to determine which uses are best suited for each area. I am encouraged to hear that the collaborative process is working.

I would like to meet with you to discuss your concerns and I would appreciate if you would please call Becky Stensrud at (406) 329-3315 to arrange a time to meet.

Sincerely,

THOMAS L. TIDWELL
Regional Forester

cc: Chris N Brown, Jonathan Stephens, Deborah L Austin, Catherine Barbouletos, Dave T Bull, Becki J Heath, Paul Bradford, Ranotta McNair, Bruce Ramsey, Tom Reilly

