

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest

2250 South Main St.

Delta, CO 81416

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Gunnison SnoTrackers Snowmobile Club. Our mission is to provide groomed trails near the Kebler, Ohio Pass and Erickson Springs trailheads. We also work to protect winter access to public land and promote cohesion with other user groups within the public lands of Gunnison County. We currently groom 50 miles of trails from the Kebler Trailhead near Crested Butte.

We feel that all users can co-exist with the original Gang of Nine (current use Plan A) agreement, and by limiting motorized use any further will compact users and create unintended user conflict. As more winter backcountry users arrive each year the need to spread out has never been more important. We ask that the GMUG adopt a multi-use approach which allows users to spread out. This approach will greatly reduce unintended user conflict.

Areas of Concern:

Poverty Gulch

Plan A Designation of Brush Creek

Pearl Pass Area

East Brush Creek

Crystal Pass / Tilton Pass Areas

The Beckwiths

For the Snowmobilers, Beckwith possible closures would impact us the most. This is a great area to spread out on during the very busy times like holidays and weekends. The Crystal/ Tilton possible closure would also greatly impact us because we like to ride to Aspen and this is the safest way. We are in agreement with Share the Slate that these areas should have no closures to OSVs.

The Economic impacts of snowmobilers:

1. \$127 million spent on Colorado (2014-15 study by the Economic Contribution of Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation in Colorado)
2. Motorized users accounted for 6,431 visits out of a total of 15,210 visits to trailheads in the north end of the Gunnison Valley (Winter 2017-2018 by Western Colorado University Masters Environmental Management) This is nearly half of the studied users! If each user spent \$75 on supplies, fuel and food, the total is \$482,325.

Snowmobiles have a minimal impact on wildlife

Study after study has proven that snowmobilers have minimal to zero impact on wildlife. In certain case studies, it has been proven that snowmobilers packing the trails actually benefit certain wildlife by expanding their foraging range. Elk, deer and moose have already migrated to lower elevations by the time OSVs are able to ride. Studies conducted near Vail Pass showed Lynx had little to no interest in passing snowmobilers. Recent studies in Yellowstone back up these findings.

Conclusions:

Gunnison SnoTrackers strongly opposes Plan D as we feel that it unfairly targets OSV use for sweeping closures. We stand by Plan A, with some discrepancies pointed out by Share the Slate, that need to be ironed out. 95.5% of national forest visits were very or somewhat satisfied with their visit. (According to page 30 of the GMUG visitor report and the National Visitor Use Monitoring Program) So we are unclear why massive changes are needed. Only special interest groups that do not promote multi-use and cohesiveness would encourage such change.

Thank you considering our input for the Forest Plan Revision for the GMUG.

SnoTrackers Board of Directors