

June 21, 2016

Rob Robertson
Washakie District Office
333 East Main Street
Lander, WY 82520

Dear Mr. Robertson:

It seems like I have spent many tortured hours penning comments to the Shoshone Forest Service on the Forest Plan and now the Travel Plan. As painful as it has been for me writing, I have a reasonable sense that it has been more painful for all of you reading.

I have some general comments and a few specific comments. I am trying to limit myself to those things I know best and avoid the arguments and positions of others. I live in Sunlight Valley, so my focus is in the North.

General Comments:

1. The core directive in the Forest Plan and articulated at the start of the travel planning was that the Northern Shoshone should maintain its "backcountry character." I applaud that directive and completely support the Forest Service's commitment to it. Expanding motorized use cannot be a long-term way to achieve that goal.
2. Enforcement always seems the orphan in these plans. I know that a great effort has been made to involve all the opposing voices and to look at ways of prevention and education. I have seen some modest barriers reap a good harvest. Henry's Mill on the top of Dead Indian is a good example, but even there the barriers need to be more substantial and the signage clear. The lack of barriers and signage lead to messes like that at the head of Sulfur Creek. Somehow the FS must commit more resources to the prevention-education-enforcement of the Travel Plan.
3. I can't speak to most of the road closures. In my mind, I think the Wyoming Game and Fish should be the first and the last consulted on such closures, or lack of same. It is all about the wildlife.
4. I don't know how the FS can address the noise created by the four-wheelers. The Upper Sunlight is a great example on the big weekends. What that noise does to the wildlife is hard to imagine or accept. What it does to the experience for non-motorized users is clear—many have given up the Upper Sunlight for quiet weekends fishing and camping with their families. Has there been research done on the impacts of that noise?

Specific Comments:

1. Sulfur Creek Closure at the private property boundary: I support this absolutely. The easement issue may be enough of a reason, but remember that the trail, at points, is very unsafe; it might not be wise for liability reasons to have it listed in the FS maps. The head of Sulfur Creek is also great bear habitat and is pristine alpine country. Four-wheelers have left new roads and scarred landscape that will take long to heal.
2. Galena Pass and Upper Sunlight: I see you opted not to close this road. I understand it is a very popular area for four-wheeling. If you keep it open for use, it will need a strong enforcement-prevention-education effort. It is, like Sulfur Creek, important Grizzly Bear country.

I appreciate the Forest Service's efforts to involve many constituencies in the travel planning process and thank you for the opportunity to participate.

Sincerely,


Richard Ridgway

