

From: [Meredith Taylor](#)
To: [FS-travel-comments-rocky-mountain-shoshone](#)
Cc: [metaylor](#)
Subject: Shoshone NF Travel Plan Comments
Date: Monday, July 18, 2016 12:22:04 PM

To : Shoshone National Forest

Re: Travel Plan Comments

Date: July 18, 2016

From: Meredith Taylor

Regarding the proposed Travel Management Plan (WR-26) on the Shoshone National Forest (SNF), I offer these comments.

The SNF should implement a travel management plan as soon as possible to reduce the impacts of excessive road density and off-road vehicle use.

There should be no net gain of motorized trails and roads on the forest. All forest users, especially recreationists, benefit from knowing the

federal rules, so I encourage strict regulations be enforced on a white arrow access system throughout the Wind River Ranger District.

I oppose creating more trails and loop routes when the Forest Service has been unable to enforce the existing rules on motorized forest trails and roads.

A current proposal (**WR- 26**) for one of these proposals is to change the last section of Bear Creek Road (FS-501) which is the Forest Service Road that runs

directly to the Bear Basin Outfitter Camp. Currently this road is open to all vehicles. If this road is changed to 'ATVs more narrow than 65 inches" which

would include four-wheelers but not conventional pick-up trucks. I understand the need to reduce 'impact on riparian and wetland areas by lighter vehicles',

However, ATVs cause more damage to the road and adjacent areas than a pick-up that stays on the road, because they zig-zag on and off the road. Perhaps the permitted outfitter should be given a special use permit to grandfather in truck access to the Bear Basin camp during the summer and fall operating season.

Some roads and motorized trails are opened too early in the spring, causing erosion, water quality degradation and wintering wildlife displacement problems.

Spring horn hunting seems to be an increasing problem that reflects poorly on all motorized vehicle users. Horn hunters are a unique forest user group that needs special consideration during this travel planning process. I purposefully avoid many areas on the Wind River District because of the high density of motorized roads and trails. I understand there is a need for motorized recreation and I have non-motorized places on the forest to visit. However, I do not wish to see more public lands areas roaded (both legal and illegal) as a result of this travel planning process.

Regarding winter use, I enjoy snowshoe and cross-country ski travel. I have witnessed the enthusiastic response during recent winters by non-motorized recreationists because of the grooming at Deception Creek. The saying "If you build it, they will come" certainly applies successfully to this area. There must be other

opportunities for similar non-motorized recreation trails such as around Togwotee Pass, Brooks Lake and the Pinnacles, so that there is not such a monopoly by snowmobiles.

The following comments address the proposed Bachelor Creek to the Moon Lake area loop (WR-11). I know the history of hiking, horse, and both authorized and unauthorized

motorized trails in the Moon Lake, Grassy Lake, Bachelor Creek, and Salt Barrel Park area. I have witnessed much of the area change from horse trails with excessive illegal motorized use. The WR -11 proposed loop should not be adopted in the SNF travel plan as suggested.

1) Enforcement. There should be adequate enforcement of Forest regulations with penalties and motorized trail signing. Without these management tools in place, the

SNF travel plan is meaningless and the Law Enforcement Officers cannot do their job. If the SNF cannot enforce its motorized trail rules, the number of motorized trails

should be reduced until enforcement can keep pace with use. The motorized trails

should be clearly signed as open and unauthorized motorized trails be clearly marked as closed.

In many places, closed roads need to be physically blocked with rocks or metal gates. As with Wyoming state motorized trails, white arrow system rules should be posted that

motorized roads and trails NOT marked open should be considered closed.

Recently I was riding horses with friends at the Helen Lookingbill site on Bear Creek, I saw two fiberglass

"road closed" signs snapped off at ground level and many fresh, muddy ATV tracks driving over the abused signs. This is a blatant example of where closed trail

signs were destroyed in order to pretend the trails are open. ALL SNF ROADS AND TRAILS MUST BE MARKED OPEN OR ELSE CONSIDERED TO BE CLOSED with the white arrow system.

2) Wet riparian areas, creek crossings, mud, erosion. The proposed loop route (WR-11) between Bachelor Creek and the Grassy Lake area is a steady stream of boggy, wet meadows.

Also there is one large, live stream crossing near the meadow where the Salt Barrel Park and Bachelor Creek trails merge which contributes to significant erosion

that should be closed. The trails should be routed in dry timber to avoid the wet meadows. Seasonal restrictions may be needed during the spring and early summer to

avoid these problem sites. On-going monitoring of soil erosion and water quality as well as compliance must be part of the travel plan to prevent ATVs trespassing into these

valuable riparian areas of moose and amphibian habitat.

3) RARE 2. A SNF map showed the proposed (WR-11) Bachelor Creek to Moon Lake loop slicing a RARE 2 area in half. In order to mitigate the loss of RARE 2

lands, the segment of existing motorized trail and road from the forest boundary on Lime Kiln Creek, through Salt Barrel Park, and to the junction of the proposed

loop from Bachelor Creek near Grassy Lake must be physically closed, not just signed due to all the abuse the ATVs have caused in the area since pioneering that trail for illegal motorized use. The closure of this segment of motorized road and trail would balance motorized recreation with other forest uses such as non-motorized recreation and critical wildlife habitat.

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in the future management of public lands on the Wind River District.

Sincerely,

Meredith Taylor



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