

Dick Inberg  
Wyoming Back Country Horsemen



Rob Robertson  
Washakie Ranger District  
333 East Main St.  
Lander WY 82520

RECEIVED  
JUL 22 2016  
WASHAKIE RD

Dear Mr. Robertson;

Following are my comments on the Shoshone National Forest's proposed action for its Motorized Travel Management Plan.

As Vice-President of the Wyoming Backcountry Horsemen of America, I appreciate the Forest Service commitment to keeping the Shoshone Forest a "backcountry forest". My comments will reflect the stance of the Backcountry Horsemen as well as my personal fifty-eight years of hiking, back packing, horse packing, fishing, hunting and volunteer work on the forest.

My comments will be somewhat general in that you have a detailed report on motorized travel monitoring on the Wind River District by Sarah Walker of the Wyoming Wilderness Association. I did assist Sarah, as a volunteer, with some of the field work as detailed in the report. I recently worked on clearing part of the Continental Divide Trail in the Pine Creek area of the Washakie District. That work and some riding during the fall and summer of 2015 gives me background knowledge of the area.

Of major concern on both the Washakie and Wind River District's is lack of maintenance for both motorized trails and roads. Braided trails, washed out tracks, mud bogs, trees down, etc. In talking to ATV riders, they will no longer travel some motorized trails as being too dangerous. Trails detailed in the Washakie District are Shoshone Lake road FS 350, Christina Lake road FS355 and Shoshone Lake trail FS MT01.

The concept of "loop roads" as a deterrent to illegal off road use is a complete fallacy. On the ground observations of existing "loops" show just the opposite. "Loops" as proposed only further fracture the land and provide more access for off road violations. The Washakie and Wind River districts all ready have numerous "loops", without creating more.

Lack of compliance with the Motor Vehicle Use Map is also of major concern with much confusion on the ground. A lack of infrastructure in the form of signs, barricades, gates, etc. is apparent. Also, the Motor Vehicle use map is a hard map to read with no background details.

Of major concern is the lack of law enforcement which seems to be a major hurdle that the Forest Service cannot overcome. Without law enforcement there is no compliance.

The forest lands in the Washakie district and south of highway 789 in the Wind River district, outside wilderness, are "trashed". Any concept of these lands as a "backcountry forest" is gone and un-salvageable. What few remaining "wild lands" of any size are

proposed for "loop" roads. The lands in the Wind River district, north of highway 179 are somewhat "trashed", but salvageable. Most motorized roads and trails provide access "to" and not "through". With some motorized road and trail closures and no new motorized trails, most of the area could retain the backcountry character of the Shoshone. In particular, no additional motorized routes in the Wiggins roadless area.

The Forest Service is well aware of the lack of maintenance, law enforcement and infrastructure of our current motorized trail and road system. They are also aware of what it takes to correct the system. What I can't understand is why the Forest Service continues to add to a failed system by adding new motorized routes, the idea of "looped" trails and allowing vehicles to travel off route more than 300 feet to a campsite.

It is obvious the Forest Service needs to maintain, enforce, and create infrastructure on the existing motorized system before considering any expansion. It may take the life of the current forest plan to accomplish this task.

Lets also keep in mind that 75% of the comments during the forest planning process were against any expansion of motorized use. It is also the stance of the Backcountry Horsemen.

Thank you for consideration of the above comments,

  
Dick Inberg

copy:

Joe Alexander  
Steve Schacht  
Rick Metzger