

**From:** [Robert Lansing](#)  
**To:** [FS-travel-comments-rocky-mountain-shoshone](#)  
**Cc:** [Robert T. E. \(Rob\) Lansing](#)  
**Subject:** Comment On: Winter Use Travel Plan For "Open Use" between Pilot Creek and Clark's Fork River Snowmobile Bridge ---  
**Date:** Sunday, July 24, 2016 6:56:05 PM

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I have known the Upper Clark's Fork River Valley intimately for 44 years, and am a property owner of the B4 Ranch which immediately borders the contemplated expanded lands for snowmobile use --

In short, the Upper Clark's Fork River Valley is a very narrow land form with respect to wildlife use of the area for feed, watering, wintering over, and for seasonal migration...including during winter -- As you know, Pilot Creek is the westerly limit of the table land of the Clark's Fork River Valley -- For wintering, many wildlife coming down from the high country from several major drainages in the area must travel eastwards down the narrow valley for suitable wintering habitat -- Allowing snowmobiles to go off their prescribed and very lovely snowmobile trail will only serve to disrupt wildlife in the Valley during the winter, and inhibit seasonal migration flows and wildlife calving late Winter with all the machines' residual tracks, and broken smaller trees and shrubbery left in their wake -- Also, while small, but nevertheless real and evident in the narrow Valley, the residual fuel smells/spills will degrade migration trails --

Of particular concern IS AND WILL BE the lack of self-policing and non-observance of rules for going off the Snowmobile Trail -- This concern is based on the fact of widespread, common non-observance of rules and regulations TODAY by snowmobilers -- Being at the B4 for stays in all four seasons, one observes this disregard for the rules on a constant, sometimes daily, basis by snowmobilers and their fair weather counterparts, off-road vehicles ---

WORSE, when various authorities are contacted about these problems no one comes and provides a regulatory presence that I have ever seen....Not even on a Saturday morning in the heart of the snowmobile or off-road vehicle "sporting" seasons --

Thus, the degradation of this narrow strip of wildlife sensitive table land by vehicles by Legalizing "going where you want" makes a mockery of "mixed-use" and "passive" recreation options.....and turns the Upper Clark's Fork Valley into an amusement park of sorts for loud machinery ---

Last, the sensitivity of the Upper Clark's Fork Valley for wildlife habitat and migration was certified in the finding of the US District Court in the early 1980's when the installation of the Upper Clark's Fork Snowmobile Trail was challenged in that Court by local citizens on the grounds that it had never been budgeted by the Forest Service, had never had an environmental impact study prepared, and was installed without the knowledge of local officials and landowners -- The Court's finding fully agreed with the citizens while also citing expert testimony that the Upper Clark's Fork Valley comprised part of the northern reaches of the largest Grizzly Bear breeding grounds in the Lower 48 states -- The Court imposed strict usage rules for the Trail limiting its use to a few months of the year with snowmobile use strictly limited ONLY on the Snowmobile Trail -- In view of the Federal Court's finding, it is very hard to understand how "go wherever you want to go" by snowmobiles (and, as a practical matter by their off-road summer counterparts) could be approved per the present

proposal...For it would overwhelm other uses, including passive use, less noisy uses, and more disciplined uses in this QUITE NARROW corridor of Valley land --

Thank you for your attention to this matter --

Sincerely, RTE Lansing

**Robert T.E. Lansing**

Chairman

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