



Advanced Medical Imaging, LLC
2780 Hitching Post Drive
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RE: Shoshone National Forest proposal SHO-02W

Dear Shoshone National Forest travel planning members:

I am a member of the Sweetwater County Snowpokes snowmobile and ATV/UTV club based in Rock Springs, Wyoming. [REDACTED] to enjoy the special, unique outdoor lifestyle found only in Wyoming. OSV and ORV activities were a key factor [REDACTED] practice medicine in an otherwise physician underserved area. Many of my physician colleagues here have similarly chosen Wyoming to practice medicine because of the opportunity to engage in such outdoor activities.

I would like to thank the Shoshone National Forest (SNF) for the opportunity to participate in this important planning process. My comments, concerns, and suggested solutions to the SHO-02W proposal are as follows:

1. Start and finish dates to the OSV/ORV season are not indicated or validated with current available data. No known substantiated resource damage in this area is documented. This would suggest efficacious management practices are already in place with the current use areas. Judicious and timely SNF management in association with partnering local organizations such as the Snowpokes, has facilitated dissemination of current allowable uses and best practices in the SNF. Local pro-environment organizations, such as the Snowpokes, working together with the SNF can best promote the preservation and optimal use of the SNF. This mutually beneficial approach to fulfill the needs of the public and ensure SNF user safety and resource preservation are essential.
2. Allow OSV use in general for as long as the snow is available, as it distributes users spatially over more of the forest and temporally over a greater time period, thus lessening potential impacts to individual locations that might otherwise sustain more damage from use during a shorter time period or smaller geographical area. Please also consider historical utilization, and adjust those dates to conform to the demonstrated public need and demand. We have seen historic OSV use from October 15th through June 15th. We also feel that if dates are used, there needs to be flexibility, to account for years when there is adequate snowfall to allow for later/earlier use. Furthermore, current regulation is in place that addresses potential resource damage. The 36 CFR 261.15(h) states: "It is prohibited to operate any vehicle off Forest Development, State, or County Roads in a manner which damages or unreasonably disturbs the land, wildlife, or vegetative resources." This is the regulation the SNF could use to promote appropriate use or, if needed, to cite someone for causing resource damage if using a snowmobile off trail when there is inadequate snow cover.



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3. Usage dates should be alterable, within reasonable established parameters, by local organizations or other designees of the SNF. Furthermore, SNF use access via usage dates would eliminate paradoxical high and low elevation access situations that would otherwise surface if snow depth rules dictated access.

4. Proposed new trail from the Painter Store, travelling up to trail A (proposal NZ-4w) will be a much needed addition to the current trail system. It will be a benefit to the Crandall area community as well. Historic use, low levels of potential wildlife disturbance, and no potential resource impacts, all suggest that this is an appropriate trail addition. Some of the other benefits are less congestion at the junction parking area, decreased use on the lower portion of trail A, and improved safety with the new trail markers in place.

5. The economic impact snowmobiling/OSV use has on our economy in Wyoming, per the University of Wyoming study, reveals the much needed revenue to the state was in excess of \$175,000,000; approximately half of which was derived from tourism. Of note, the Beartooth/Cooke City area is one of the highest rated destinations for snowmobiling in the US. Thus, the economic impact of OSV use is very important and essential to Wyoming's communities, especially in light of lessened other available financial revenue sources to our state at present. An indirect economic benefit of sufficient available usage areas engages the Wyoming residents, and guests, to come to or reside in Wyoming. Access to the SNF also helps retains residents, such as myself. Thus, I strongly encourage the SNF to avoid restricting new portions of the forest to use, barring strong scientific, consensus driven data necessitating otherwise.

I appreciate the Shoshone National Forest giving me the opportunity to express my concerns and suggest a few solutions during this comment period. Along with the many other members of the Sweetwater Snowpokes club, I look forward to a cooperative, mutually beneficial partnership and alliance with the SNF as we work towards reasonable use and resource protection solutions now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Fred L. Matti, MD

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