

Shoshone National Forest  
808 Meadow Lane Ave  
Cody, WY 82414

Travel Management Plan,

I would like to start on a more warm and welcoming note, however, I find it very hard to hide the overwhelming disappointment I feel towards the Shoshone National Forest Service. I'll be honest in saying that a couple years ago I was not nearly as involved when the first travel management plan was proposed due to time and traveling for work. Now I feel that I must take a stand and represent hundreds of people who are unaware of this "travel management plan". After two years, the public interest on this issue has finally simmered down. The Forest Service has waited until the summer ATV/UTV enthusiasts have gone home, and have shoved this "travel management plan" down the fast track before the snowmobilers arrive in full force. A very cowardly strategy if I do say so myself, with hopes of little to no resistance on a travel management plan chalked full of changes not "for the greatest good". If the Service would advertise the changing of a travel management plan to the public with greater effort, maybe this wouldn't be such a mess. You have no problem putting up a gate with a huge road closed sign to advertise that to the public.

When I looked at the plan initially I found myself laughing, thinking what I was reading must be a joke. Yet, coming to the realization that it must be true since you included it on the map for the scoping document. What made me laugh was the fact that the "new" motorized route WR-27 will be for 50" vehicles or less? I am completely baffled at how any of you are considered professionals or experts. According to the map, someone in a 64" side by side can travel on either entrance to this loop until the very short 1 mile stretch where it becomes 50" or less, then they must turn around. What is the reason behind this separation between 50" and 64" vehicles? If anyone can write or call me and explain even a fraction of common sense behind this decision, I would appreciate it. Segregation between 50" and 64" vehicles needs to come to a stop. Let's be real, the forest service has a lot more side by sides greater than 50" than four wheelers less than 50" so what's the point?

The next major issue I see with this management plan is displayed on the maps of sub part A. There are miles and miles of "Admin" roads that need opened to the public immediately! This is not the Kings forest! What gives you the right to close down an already established road to the public, but keep the key to the gate in your pocket for "government use". Is it the fact that the service is greedy for control? Or do you feel that it is too much maintenance for the Forest Service to handle? If it's the maintenance, let's be honest here, you can thank the locals for the majority of trail maintenance. Almost all of the dead-end roads that have been closed lead to something of interest. They're leading to lakes, creeks, ridges, and meadows for hunting and hiking. When will the Forest Service learn? Closing these dead-end trails cause much more destruction than good for the forest. If you look at every single closed gate, there has been another trail established going around it.

Indian Point trail that leads down to Dutch Oven Springs needs to be opened immediately! Forest service along with ATV club of Dubois established this trail before the forest revision. The Forest Service has now wrongly slipped in a section of RARE II/Roadless boundary through this area, robbing the public of an already existing loop trail. Nobody can give me a straight answer of why this has happened; some say it was due to an elk calving ground. So, the answer to that problem is to close it? Typical. Why can't

we explore a seasonal closer during elk calving season, similar to Table Mountain closer. Would that make too much sense?

On to the subject of snowmobile season, high altitude and low altitude seasons. This sounds like the Forest Service is digging and clawing for more control, time to drain the swamp. How can season be put on snowfall controlled by mother nature? Some years the snow comes early and leaves late. Take a close look at the snowfall this year and last winter, it came early and became deep. Not only is this proposal of a snowmobile season pointless, it will greatly impact our local community. The snowmobilers that have come to ride this year have already brought thousands and thousands of dollars to our town, while hurting nothing in the forest. Keep in mind the trappers, mountain lion hunters, and other outdoor enthusiast that ride a snowmobile in the low altitude areas long before December 1<sup>st</sup>. If you haven't noticed, they ride on top of the snow not damaging any of the forest floor. So, if there must be a season, don't discriminate, apply the season to skiers, hikers...heck make it a no-fly zone so a low flying plane doesn't disturb the snow.

With much more to say, I'm going to wrap this letter up and head to the local meeting at the Headwaters center. I have always had high hopes for the Forest Service to make decisions "for the greatest good" as their moto states, failing thus far. When the public comment time frame comes to an end, all I can hope is that the Service takes all comments into consideration, in all reality that is who you work for, the public. Travel management issues will become non-existent once you listen to the public and become part of the solution and not the power-hungry problem.

Sincerely,



Carston Akins

