

From: Meredith Taylor [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, December 01, 2017 6:19 AM
To: Meredith Taylor; Meredith Taylor; FS-travel-comments-rocky-mountain-shoshone
Subject: Shoshone NF Travel Plan Comments December 1, 2017

To : Shoshone National Forest

Re: Travel Plan Comments

Date: December 1, 2017

From: Meredith Taylor

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

I'm not sure why this process is taking so long, but the SNF should implement its revised travel management plan as soon as possible to reduce the impacts of excessive road density and off-road vehicle use. At the recent public meeting in Dubois Nov 29, I was disappointed that the Proposed Action is to increase the number of miles of roads and trails on the SNF and Wind River District (WRD). Since the road density is already too high here, 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 as it was on the white arrow access system throughout the WRD. The Proposed Action to require a sticker will only create more complicated and confusing management that will see little to no enforcement due to the lack of an LEO on the WRD. It makes no sense to create more trails and loop routes when the Forest Service has been unable to enforce the existing rules on existing motorized forest trails and roads. The proposal to have both 4WD and ATV use on roads such as the Burroughs Creek loop makes more sense.

A current proposal (WR- 26) is to change the last section of Bear Creek Road (FS-501) to Bear Basin. Currently this road is open to all vehicles. I don't understand

the proposed change to 'ATVs more narrow than 64 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 existing road and pioneered routes adjacent to the road than a pick-up that stays on the road, because they zig-zag on and off the road. Perhaps WR-26 should be closed to all motorized use past the gate to have equal opportunities and more consistent resource protection.

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 motorized vehicle users. 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 as well as 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 of increased use during recent winters by non-motorized

recreationists and DART grooming the trails at Deception Creek and Falls Creek loop. There should 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.

Re: (WR-11) the proposed Bachelor Creek to the Moon Lake area loop is a mistake and should not be allowed. 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 seen this area change from horse trails to illegal ATVs with excessive illegal motorized use. The WR -11 proposed loop should not be adopted in the SNF travel plan as suggested, because it just legalizes the previous illegal use. I recently rode this closed trail on horseback and was impressed by how well the resource had reclaimed the area without the motorized use impacts. This is how the RARE 2 area should be managed consistent with the Forest Plan. That closure should be the Proposed Action and WR-11 should NOT be constructed there, but rather keep the one way route on the Moon Lake Road. This proposed trail (WR-11) will only create more resource damage with continued off-trail motorized use in that area between Bachelor Creek and Grassy Lake.

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 should be marked open unless closed like the white arrow system did.

2) Wet riparian areas, creek crossings, mud, and erosion should be avoided to reduce resource damage as has occurred on the proposed WR-11. This proposed trail should not be part of the system.

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 to Grassy Lake must be physically closed, not just signed due to the abuse the ATVs have caused in the area since pioneering that trail of illegal motorized use. The present 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. This area provides an annual migration route for wildlife, as I saw this fall when hundreds of animals including elk, deer, moose, bears, wolves and coyotes moved down the valley through this area from Union Pass area towards Whiskey Mountain and east.

We are proud of our free-ranging wildlife in the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem and should manage the WRD travel routes to not impact these migration routes.

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in the future management of public lands on the WRD of the SNF.

Sincerely,

Meredith Taylor



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