Shoshone Forest Service Travel Management comments: 9/14/20

\*Since there has been such a long pause between the Forest Service Plan (FS -plan) being finished and this travel management exercise, more hands-on, face-to-face public sessions need to be effectuated. The webinar showing the plan with the alternatives was poorly attended as compared to actual public meetings would have been. The travel management changes and road closures are too important to rush this planned process to completion. Certainly over 500 pages of dialog and maps deserves more time to digest and question.

\*The FS plan goals contemplated looped road being completed, consistent with the increase of motorized travel demand and to offset the significant reduction in road/trails over the last decades. The Alternatives should spell out where they are possible and planned.

\*The travel management plan and eventual alternative selection must include a process on how public and private entities can join the FS in partnerships that can improve the quality and maintenance of the system. Help in terms of labor and funding is available to the FS if they can find a way to ask for it!

\*Table 7: Road maintenance indicated total mileage (Total NFSR mileage) under current conditions of 1,134.32 with all five levels being summarized by alternative.

\*\*Additional mileage included under ML 1 should not be considered by the public as those miles would not be available for public use as explained in Table 1.

\*\* ML 2 mileage under current conditions is 761 but would be REDUCED TO 630 MILES UNDER ALTERNATIVE 2 (17% REDUCTION) AND 604 UNDER ALTERNATIVE #3 (21 % REDUCTION).

\*Decommissioned road & trails: In the spirit of full disclosure and ease of use, under both alternatives, the actual miles being decommissioned or moved from open to level 1 should be shown to the public in a table with details so we easily discuss what roads/trails are being closed under each alternative. Without the table or explanation showing the changes only, it is difficult to compare the maps etc. to ascertain the impact. Please note that the Appen B-supplement or the excel worksheet “subpart B Route comparison by alternative” just recently received from Mark Foster does not indicate WHY roads or routes are changing from open to closed or reclassed/date restricted. The public can only guess…

\*I do not have any objections to current level 1 roads to be re-commissioned for logging or administrative use and then back to level 1. Logging and generating jobs are important and that opportunity/benefit to local economies cannot be stressed enough.

\*If there are road/trails that are contemplated to change from full-sized use to 64 or 50” or less, each change needs to be documented specifically in a table for the public to be able to respond and why.

\*Seasonal closures Under 3.3.5 (Conclusion): If I am understanding the conclusion correctly, Alternative 2 proposes an additional 60 miles of NFSRs and 158 miles of NFSTs will be subject to seasonal closure restrictions as compared to the current condition (Alt 1). That is almost draconian in nature. The economic impact under Alt 2 and Alt 3 dialog appears to dismiss the economic impact as “minimal”. Depending upon where and when the closures are implemented, the impact upon the motorized public **WILL** be significant. Our motorized travel system on the Shoshone is minute as compared to the total forest acreage. Please consider also the limitations in terms of miles available and the number of days seasonal use is allowed. Every mile of available motorized use is precious and should not be marginalized as minimal.

\*I noted that the Cody Enterprise reported that the decision to move from a road to a trail was a reflection of fiscal feasibility, not traffic volumes. Even though grant money might be available for a trail, it not a given. The trail system does have additional restrictions of use vs. roads. Public consideration should be the real decision point, which means recognizing existing users, sizes and traffic volumes should have priority. By changing the use of the roads into trails discriminates against the public that only has a pickup vs a person that can afford an ATV. That change cannot be ignored as inconsequential.

\*As indicated on page 55, the reduction of ML2 from 761 to 630 miles would reduce the annual funding needs by only $19,940 as compared to the current road system. The loss of motorized public access to save this small, immaterial amount pales in relation to total forest budgets.

\*Since I came to Cody in 1972, the reduction in motorized roads/trails has been reduced significantly. (system roads decreased 18% as acknowledged on page 8 since 1989). The current forest plan was to change the planned yearly reductions and acknowledged the increase in demand for motorized use with the concomitant looped road/trail goal. Yet these travel management alternatives fly in the face of those goals. I am adamantly opposed to any reduction in the public’s roads/trails on the Shoshone system and as such, the only reasonable path forward to is keep the current condition. Maintenance issues **CAN** be solved with some effort and partnerships.

\*specifically, the Sweetwater road, #423, is scheduled to be closed under both Alternative 2 and 3. After almost a century of heavy public use during the summer and hunting seasons, I strenuously object to the decommission of the road or any part of the road. With some repair work, that partners will help with, this very important access to thousands of acres would be assessable to the public again. (not just horseback or long backpack users).

\*Also, the Morrison Jeep Road, #119-120, needs to continue to be a valuable road for public use. It’s historic and current value combined with the scenery and access is second to no other road in the forest inventory. However, it needs some road maintenance in certain sections for the public’s safety, not closed or unnecessarily limited in any fashion. Partnerships can help solve financial burden issues.

\*Over-the-snow use; As an avid snowmobiler, I strongly support no additional restrictions from the current condition, the Ghost trail be completed, the High Lakes area continue to be utilized by snowmobilers along with a longer season as suggested by the Cody Country snowmobile club.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my opinions. I commend the FS staff on the preliminary environmental assessment package-it obviously required a significant effort and the staff should be acknowledged for that. I specifically want to thank Mr. Mark Foster for the time and effort he spent discussing this travel management preliminary EA with us.

Sincerely,

Loren Grosskopf

[PII]