

Shoshone National Forest Travel Management
Request for Public Input
Comment Form

Ranger District: Wind River

Comments on Current Proposals

1. Which proposal are you commenting on?

WR-31

2. Provide comments below on the proposal: (continue on back if needed)

Please be specific and provide rationale for your position. In other words why do you like or dislike about the proposal.

I am not in favor of this proposal to convert this power line corridor into a motorized trail. It doesn't form a loop trail, there is very little room at the southern start near the highway for parking, and I would think that there is an increased liability concern that the special use permittee, High Plains Power, Inc. would probably not want to have.

More importantly, the portion of this power line west of Brooks Lake road (FSR 515) to FSR 584 is in Primary Conservation Area (PCA) for the Yellowstone grizzly bear population. The forest plan has a goal to manage grizzly bear habitat within the primary conservation area to sustain the Yellowstone grizzly bear population. Outside the primary conservation area in areas identified in state management plans as biologically suitable and socially acceptable for grizzly bear occupancy, accommodate grizzly bear populations to the extent that accommodation is compatible with the goals and objectives of other uses. (TES-GOAL-03).

Converting the power line in this portion of PCA could reduce the percentage of secure habitat in the South Absaroka subunit #3 and the standard in the new forest plan following the Final Conservation Strategy for the Grizzly Bear in the Greater Yellowstone Area is to, maintain the percent of secure habitat in bear management subunits at or above 1998 levels inside the primary conservation area (TES-STAND-04). The standardized computer program that is used to make the calculations of secure habitat buffers all relevant motorized routes by 500 meters. The area outside of this buffer is secure habitat. Process that calculates the motorized access route density is calculated using a moving windows process with 30-meter cells and a one-mile square window and includes affects of motorized routes one mile buffer outside of the PCA. Thus some of this proposal south and east of the Brooks Lake road can contribute to the reduced secure habitat in this bear management subunit.

Most importantly, this area, which includes Mud Lake, is one of my favorite elk hunting places. Before the highway was reconstructed and the parking area for snowmobiles was built, I would park off the highway in a wide shoulder that provide of view of the Brooks Lake Falls on the other side of the highway and hike up to the power line corridor and beyond. Since the snowmobile parking area was constructed and my former parking spot was removed, I park in the snowmobile parking area or the approach to it in front of the gates and hike into the area, hunting as I go. I have been disappointed when I find ATV tracks from illegal use all the way to Mud Lake.

So instead of supporting this proposal, my proposal is to require the special use permittee for this corridor is to lower their closure gates to prevent users from driving their ATVs under the gates and to make their access points more secure by preventing the users from constructing or pioneering routes around those gates.

Mark Hinschberger