

Shoshone National Forest Travel Management
Request for Public Input

Ranger District: Wind River Ranger District

Proposer: Thomas Turiano, [REDACTED]

New Proposals

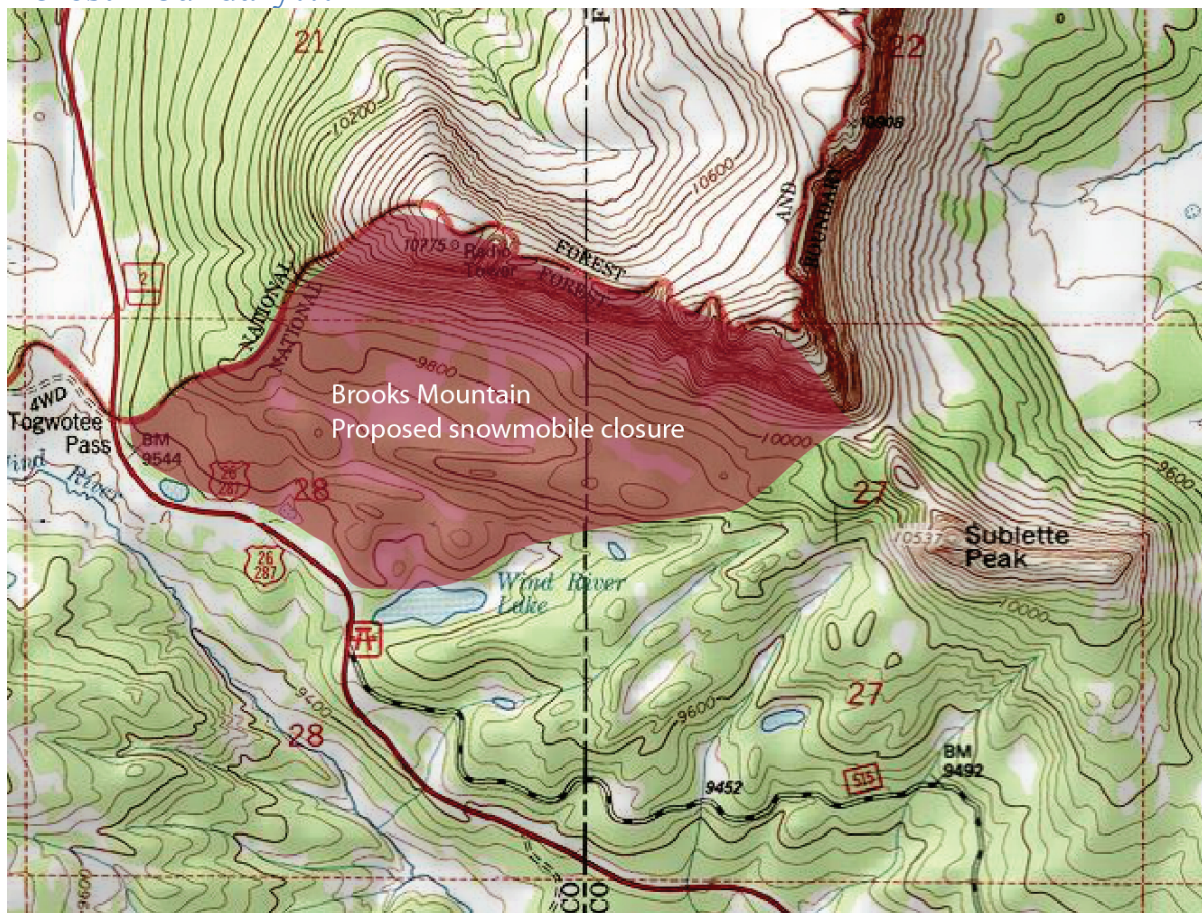
1. What is the proposal? (loop; route; closures; restrictions) , etc.)

I would like to propose a snowmobile closure under the breccia cliffs of Brooks Mountain and Pinnacle Butte to protect the pristine nature of the snow in this area, as well as to protect the local soundscape by reducing the echo of snowmobile noise off the cliffs. My proposal would also preserve popular snowmobile routes through Sublette Pass and Pinnacles Trail.

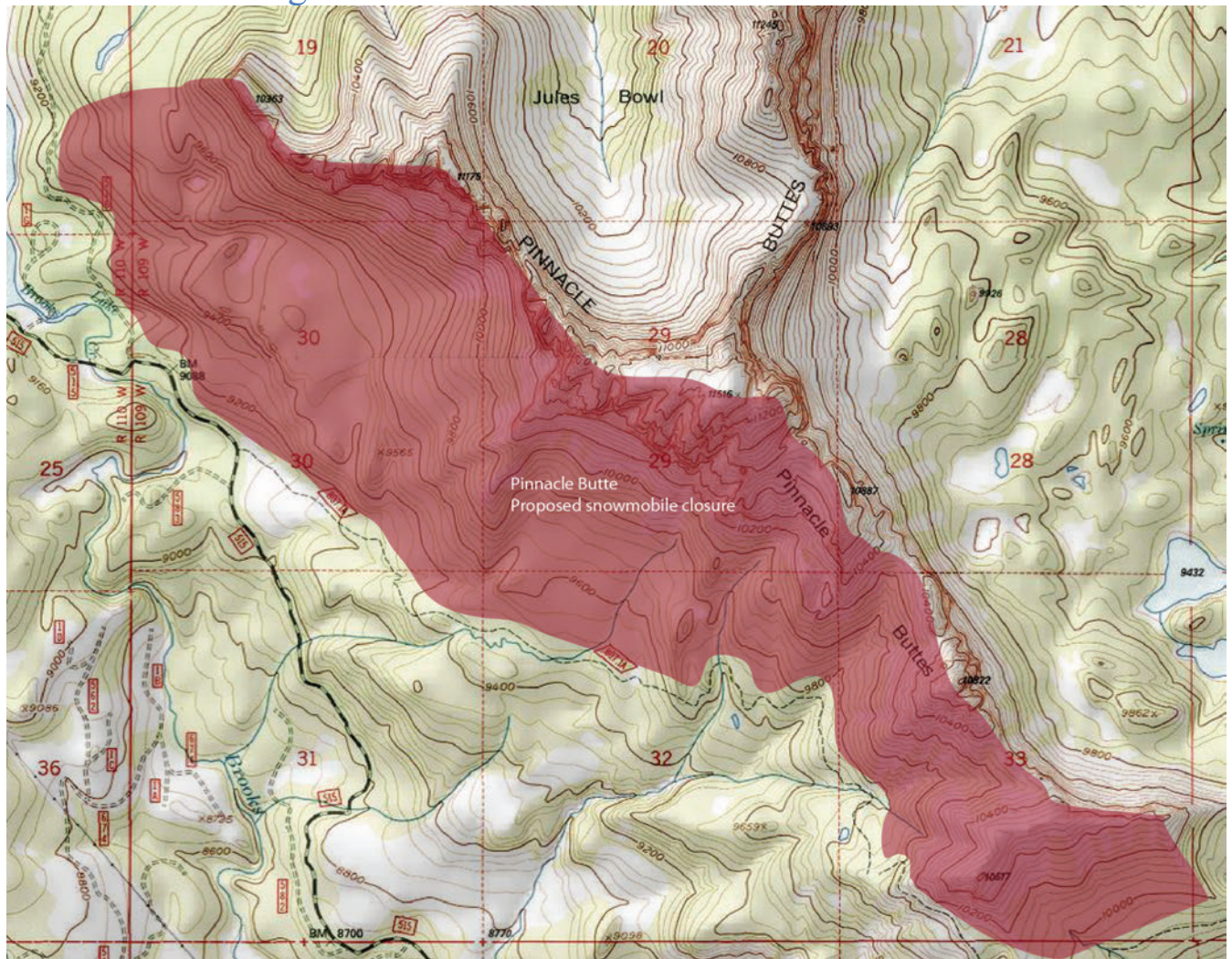
2. Where is the proposal located?

This proposed snowmobile closure is located under the south-facing breccia cliffs of both Brooks Mountain and Pinnacle Butte.

On Brooks Mountain, the closure would extend northward from Highway 287 (with a 200-foot travel buffer) and the Wind River Lake drainage to the Forest Boundary...



On Pinnacle Butte, the snowmobile closure would extend northeastward from Forest Road #516 and Pinnacles Trail (with a 200-foot travel buffer) to the Pinnacle Butte ridgecrest...



3. Why is your proposal desired or needed?

Backcountry skiers have long been users of Togwotee Pass, and interest in non-motorized human-powered skiing continues to grow. My proposed closures encompass two popular areas for backcountry skiing where skiers enjoy skiing the south-facing couloirs off Brooks Mountain and Pinnacle Butte. There are two primary reasons why this closure is needed:

1. Because of the very cliffy nature on the south sides of these mountains, the echo and amplification of snowmobile noise is a growing problem. This noise is a great disturbance to wintering bighorn

sheep, and backcountry skiers seeking a quiet wilderness experience. Moreover, the noise, which has grown worse in recent years because of increasing numbers of louder powerful machines encroaching closer and closer to the cliffs, simply is not in keeping with the quiet aesthetic ethic in the buffer zones of designated Wilderness. Indeed, wilderness travelers within the Teton Wilderness, on the gentle summit of Brooks Mountain, are fully aware of any snowmobilers cruising under the cliffs below. The noise is amplified.

2. The areas under consideration are popular backcountry skiing areas because of world-class couloir skiing opportunities within close access from a major highway. Because the couloirs through these cliff areas are popular backcountry skiing destinations, there is a safety and aesthetic need to keeping the slopes below these couloirs free of snowmobile tracks. If snowmobiles are highmarking at the same time skiers are climbing or skiing, there would be increased potential of avalanche accidents. Also, the trenches of snowmobile tracks not only upset the aesthetics of a clean ski run through the couloirs and down the fall line to the base of the lower slopes, these trenches pose a great safety hazard if skiers hit them. This is an increased hazard in flat light conditions.

The aesthetic importance of keeping snowmobiles off these slopes cannot be understated. This is a world-class backcountry skiing destination. These powder slopes should be preserved for clean runs top to bottom.

This proposed closure preserves popular snowmobile travel under and away from the base of the cliffs. On Brooks Mountain, snowmobilers would still be able to cross Wind River Lake and work their way over Sublette Pass in either direction. On Pinnacle Butte, snowmobilers would still be able to use the Pinnacle Trail. Both routes would have a 200-foot travel buffer.