

March 27, 2024

Lolo National Forest Supervisor's Office
Attn: Amanda Milburn—Lolo Plan Revision
24 Fort Missoula Rd.
Missoula, MT 59804

RE : Lolo NF Plan Revision

Dear Lolo National Forest Supervisor:

I was a wildlife biologist with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks working in all parts of the Lolo NF over 30 years of management and research activities. I am very familiar with ecologically sensitive areas such as Monture Creek, the Rattlesnake, Great Burn and Cube Iron areas. I reintroduced mountain goats to the Rattlesnake in the 1980s, where they had been extirpated by overharvest which was made easier by an open road providing access to goat cliffs from Frasier Cr. on up the Rattlesnake drainage. Cut throat trout have had similar problems for the same reasons. Too much access to certain areas remains a serious issue.

In one way or another concentrated recreational activity, whether it be hunting and fishing, bicycling and hiking, snowmobiling and ATVing, can have negative consequences for a long list of wildlife species. People love our favorite places to death, as you well know. Regulations and rules are needed to protect the elements that make those places special. In addition to mountain goats in the Rattlesnake, Great Burn and Cube Iron, we can point to the losses of westslope cutthroat trout, bull trout, in the very same areas. All are now doing better because reintroductions, regulations and road closures since the 80s. In large part we are still waiting to see if the Lolo NF and MFWP have done enough for lynx, wolverine and grizzly bears. I see no reason to relax current regulation of access

Every year people invent new ways to access and use wild country. The US Forest Service does not seem immune to this movement. I am worried that the National Forests are backtracking from their commitment to protect natural resources to providing easier access.. The Clearwater NF decision to backtrack from management of snowmobiles and ATVs in Idaho's side the Great Burn area is particularly galling.

In the revised Lolo National Forest Plan, I urge you to grant no new access to the Monture, Rattlesnake, Great Burn and Cube Iron areas. Additional human use of those areas will only diminish their ecological values.

Yours,



Robert Henderson

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