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Organization:

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Comments: June 22, 2016

Amy Dillon, Forest Plan Revision Team

Colville National Forest, Colville Supervisor's Office

765 South Main. Colville, Washington 99114

Dear Amy and the Forest Management Plan Revision team,

I am grateful for the opportunity provided by the Forest Service for me to comment on the Forest Management Plan Revision. As a long time mountain biker, this plan is of high importance to me as it will determine mountain bike access in this forest for the next 15 years or more.

The riding experience in the Colville National Forest unique to Washington State and is one that cannot be found elsewhere. I have personally ridden both the Kettle Crest and Abercrombie Mountain trails and both were exceptional experiences. Nowhere else have I seen the long uninterrupted mountain bike accessible trails with the combination of solitude and physical beauty as can be found at Kettle Crest. Nowhere else have I found a place can I ride through so many microclimatic zones and plant species mixes as you can descending from the top of Abercrombie down to the Columbia River.

The Colville National Forest's extensive trail networks have the essential ingredients for multi-day mountain bike riding experiences. The region as a whole has great potential to become a national riding destination. This promises low-impact non-motorized trail use and significant economic benefit for communities in Northeast Washington. I have ridden in every area of the state since the 80's and the unique ecological and trail resources in this Forest is very special to me and it is critical that the next Forest Management Plan maintains and improves mountain bike access throughout the implementation timeframe.

The draft plan and preferred alternative reflect considerable thoughtful and thorough work on your part. While Alternative P is a good solution for both motorized and non-motorized recreational access, two mountain bike trail systems that are personally important to me and highly valued by others in the mountain bike community would be lost due to proposed wilderness designations in Alternative P. For this reason, I urge you to implement the following two changes to the plan:

*Change the Coyote Mountain/Hoodoo roadless area to backcountry or wilderness in proposed Bald/Snow/White wilderness designation

oThis avoids eliminating a contiguous Kettles Crest riding experience, as well as connection to Thirteen Mile Trail.

oThis unifies all of the Kettle Crest under one management designation and preserves the unique north-south Crest riding experience, as well as un-interrupted access to the Pacific Northwest Trail.

*The Abercrombie Mountain and Silver Creek trails should be removed from recommended wilderness, and instead designated as backcountry, or another SIA.

oThis would preserve The Abercrombie and Silver Creek loop for mountain bikers as this high alpine riding experience cannot be replicated elsewhere in WA.

If you incorporate the changes above, I fully endorse Alternative P. It facilitates trail maintenance needs with chainsaws, allows the Kettle Crest to be designated as one uniform management designation, in turn making it easier to promote and market it as a MUST VISIT contiguous geological, ecological, and recreational destination!

Thank you again for your hard work and opportunity to voice my strong support for maintained mountain bike access to the awe-inspiring trails of the Colville National Forest.

Sincerely,

John Traeger

