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Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a local landowner who has used the Bear Basin area for multiple types of recreation since 1989, I have a vested interest in your proposals. I have tried to list my comments below as they relate separately to your multiple proposed changes in this Project.

1. SNOWMACHINE ACCESS TO GROOMED TRAIL SYSTEM: My most important comment is to MAINTAIN SNOWMOBILE ACCESS TO THE SNOW MACHINE GROOMED TRAIL SYSTEM defined by Thorn Creek Rd (50452) and Brundage Lookout Rd (50451). Historically, an agreement between home owners in the Bear Basin who wished to maintain access to the groomed snowmobile system was [ldquo]brokered[rdquo] under USFS ranger Gary Elliott (to keep local snowmobilers from using or cutting across the groomed ski trails) requesting snow machine riders from Kings Pines 2 and Bear Basin lots to ride along the East-West USFS/McCall City limits boundary heading east to the Bear Basin/Brundage Lookout Rd (50451) and then use this road to reach the Jct of 50452 and 50451 (intersection with the Groomed Trail System). Snowmobile access was [ldquo]granted[rdquo] to the east of 50451 in Bear Basin meadow but not to the west. This included use of the old USFS Rd 844 (Green Gate at Jct 50451 and 50452) which leads on to state lands and provided a second access to Brundage area that kept locals from interfacing with the majority of out-of-towners who access the trails by riding from West Face parking lot. Per personal communications with Ed Roper of the Payette Lakes Ski Trails, even he is in agreement with keeping this east-west route open as it has [ldquo]cured[rdquo] the initial problem of riders going over their ski trails.

2. CLOSURE OF EAST HALF OF BEAR BASIN: I am in favor of closing the area to the east of 5041 in Bear Basin Meadow to over snow motorized vehicles. It appears in your current document that this area proposed for closure is bordered on the north side by the old USFS RD 844, though this is not labeled as such on any of your current maps. I request to MAINTAIN OVERSNOW MOTORIZED USE OF RD 844, but agree that this is a good boundary for your proposed closure of the [ldquo]East Half of Bear Basin Meadow[rdquo].

3. NEW TRAIL ALONG 50839: I am in favor of creating a [ldquo]user-created trail[rdquo] paralleling USFS Rd 50839 for mountain bikers to miss the horrible basalt surface on that road, and to miss some of the more sensitive wet areas out in our [ldquo]Little Bear Meadow[rdquo], but I question the location of this trail in the small area between the McCall City Limits and Rd 50839 (heading East West until this trail turns north along the east side of our [ldquo]Little Bear Meadow[rdquo]). This East-West direction is exactly where the snowmobilers are requested to ride in the winter. My concern is that this new [ldquo]trail[rdquo] will then become the accepted route for snowshoers in the winter which will then create more conflict, rather than less between snow machine enthusiasts and those on snow shoes. My suggestion is that this new trail head up the hill to the north and west from the junction of Bear Basin/Brundage Lookout Rd (50451) with 50839, and stay on the north side of Rd 50839, to take foot traffic away from the potential [ldquo]interaction[rdquo] area along the East-West USFS/McCall City limits boundary. In fact there is a very old road bed just to the north of the 50839 road that my family and I used for many years that would make a perfect site for the new trail. (I would be happy to show this to you in summer as it is a delightful little trail that does exactly what you appear to want, with minimal clearing.)

4. CLOSURE OF 50839 WINTER AND SUMMER: Why close Rd 50839? Locals use this for finding huckleberries, wood gathering, and to watch a beautiful sunset just minutes from our house. I am guessing you wish to minimize conflict in the summer between motorized vehicles and bicyclists but closing this road all together seems unnecessary and severe. I am totally against this, even though over the years I have witnessed unauthorized [ldquo]midnight[rdquo] illegal wood gathering and [ldquo]mudders[rdquo] illegally tearing up the meadow to slide their vehicles through the mud. It seems a simple fence between the road and meadow plus appropriate signage should achieve your goals without closing the road we have used and loved for many years. Also, smoke jumpers use the [ldquo]Little Bear Meadow[rdquo] almost daily for training jumps during some parts of the summer and will require continued access to pick up jumpers and equipment. Closure makes no sense.

5. GRANITE MOUNTAIN CLOSURE: I am NOT in favor of the permanent Granite Mountain Closure to

snowmobilers. It seems the current set up is an adequate compromise. Your proposed closure will most likely just create more difficult situations and become expensive and impossible to enforce.

6. CLOSURE OF 50813: Why close USFS Rd 50813 to winter motorized use? This is the best route out of the West Face parking lot for snowmobilers, especially in early winter before there is sufficient snow to create the snow bridge over Little Goose Creek/Bear Basin Creek for the snow mobile groomers to make a path to the parking lot. My suggestion is to use the first part of Rd 50813 and improve the connection to the Thorn Creek Rd (50452) so the groomers can use in early season. This will also direct the motorized users to the north, and away from the non-motorized Payette Lakes Nordic area on Rd 50841.

7. PARKING AREA AT BEAR BASIN MEADOW: A better parking lot at the flat area by the fence at the south edge of Bear Basin Meadow on Rd 50451 is a good idea and long past due. However, should the Nordic area chose to plow the road to this larger lot in the winter (since neither the City nor the USFS will do that), this will cause a HUGE increase in traffic on the Bear Basin/Brundage Lookout Rd 50451 through the city limits, causing the potential for numerous accidents. This is especially true on the tight S-corners between Lots 16-17, as there is always poor visibility year round, but worsened in winter due to high snow banks and narrower road base from encroachment of these snow banks. Without costly improvements to this road (for which no one wants to pay), I predict the parking lot could create disastrous problems for the local homeowners and a potential for liability to the USFS.

8. Dispersed Camping along USFS Rd 50451 in Bear Basin Meadow: Every year, campers with their trailers destroy more and more of the fragile vegetation and wetlands in the meadow. I feel you need to create designated campsites with adequate road bed and clearly block off further encroachment into the meadow, as well as in the area near the jct of 50451 and 50488 (at one point last summer, 6 trailers were crammed in here for a family reunion!). Please put limits on this! Fences? Stumps? Rocks? Apparently campers need some type of defined boundary to keep their vehicles in a [ldquo]designated campsite.[rdquo]

9. CLOSURE OF 51913 IN ECKS FLATS: While this makes safety sense, especially with the long range shooters in this meadow, those same shooters use this road to place their targets at 1000 yds in the meadow. I fear they will just drive in the meadow if you close the road. It has taken most of the 37 years I have lived here for the old tracks in that meadow to finally disappear!

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your new proposals. I am available at any time to discuss my suggestions further and would be interested in discussing appropriate signage to help keep over the snow motorized vehicles out of Bear Basin and where to place these signs.