Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/27/2023 12:00:00 PM
First name: Wayne
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Comments: "Object to the drastic year round and seasonal closure of public lands currently available for OSV travel. The the option of a 'No Action" alternative should be provided rather than a harsh and harsher proposal and alternative. The closure of 600,000 to 800,000 acres is simply not justified. It appears that the reduced access to public lands is based largely on Grizzly population; however there aren't any facts or figures provided to justify these proposed closures. OSV travel has occurred at various levels in the national forest for over 50 years, and the USFS doesn't have facts that show OSV usage has had a noticeable adverse impact on Grizzlys or Wildlife in general, but is proposing the closures based on 'assumptions'. As an alternative, the USFS already has authority to implement temporary closures based on established criteria should a closure be necessary (based on facts- not assumptions) that would not remove hundreds of thousands of areas from winter recreational use.

Object to the minimum snow depth requirement as it is is an unsupportable and arbitrary requirement. While it may be easy administratively to read the snow depth on a ruler, it doesn't account for micro climate effects- wind and drifting, exposure to sun, elevation, moisture content of the snow, time between the snow fall and measurement (settlement), etc. The point is that the OSV travel causes little, if any resource damage; however if there are areas where OSV does cause damage, the specific area can be closed and the OSV traffic rerouted. Other uses - hiking, equestrian use, wheeled vehicle use all have greater impact on the erosion, vegetation, sediment transport, etc. The best alternative would be to manage based on 'not causing resource damage' rather than the arbitrary snow depth requirement.

It is obvious that there are organizations/stakeholders that simply want OSV use stopped so they can claim a 'victory'. Each OSV plan that imposes further unjustified and arbitrary restrictions (aka closures) will simply move OSV use to other areas/forests/public lands that will eventually become over crowded and cause real - not imagined - conflict. While challenging, the USFS needs to make decisions based on factual and supportable information - not 'assumptions'. Arbitrary closure is not an acceptable substitute for competent management."