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Comments: Note: See attachment for annotated comments in LNFPR Draft Assessment.

To The Lolo Forest Planning Team,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. My comments are specifically related to the Lolo National Forest Draft Assessment dated June 2023 and have a focus on mountain bike use. I have four main points below, but I would also like you to consider the comments I have provided as markups to the Draft Assessment in the attached PDF because they provide much better context to the document.

1. Often in this document the terms mountain biking, bikes, and bicycling are interchanged. However, there can be distinct differences. The biggest difference is the one between road-based bicycling, and off-road based bicycling (i.e. mountain biking). I suggest specifically using the term "mountain biking" when referring to off-road trail usage.

2. As stated in Table 57, I agree that a semi-primitive experience is really important to many mountain bikers. This cannot be overstated because of the limited opportunities for mountain bikes to have a primitive backcountry experience in the Lolo NF. There are simply not many trails that provide the right combination, including physical traversability, maintenance (not 100's of downed trees), looping, trail quality, and scenery. The Draft Assessment mentions in several locations that some users are looking for "quiet" recreation, but seems to exclude mountain bikes. I think this is oversimplification because many mountain bikers are also looking for quiet recreation experience away from motorized users.

3. I would like to point out that e-bikes are completely ignored in the Draft Assessment. It seems unwise to ignore their existence considering their large growth in popularity, and because there is widespread misunderstanding about where they are allowed. If the Lolo NF does not first recognize that e-bikes are currently being used on Lolo NF trails, and where that is occurring, then how can adequate planning be performed? Please provide some additional background information in e-bike use in the Lolo NF, particularly in the Missoula area.

4. USFS legacy trails that were not built to multi-use standards present a huge obstacle to mountain biking, or rather the ability to use a mountain bike on them. There are many trails on USFS lands that are inventoried as "open to mountain bikes", but in reality they are not physically traversable by bike. In the attached PDF, I suggest rewording a sentence in the first paragraph because "challenges in navigation" does not really adequately convey the situation. My suggested sentence is, "However, many trails were not designed for mountain biking, resulting in both user conflicts and the inability of mountain bikers to be able to physically traverse the trail. "

Thank you for your time and consideration.