

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/29/2023 2:37:10 PM

First name: Kerry

Last name: White

Organization: Citizens For Balanced Use

Title: Executive Director

Comments: The Kootenai National Forest is required to use the best available science in making decisions regarding forest use and access. The majority of studies regarding human disturbance of wildlife show more disturbance by non-motorized vs motorized.

The Kootenai National Forest is ignoring this science by restricting motorized use while allowing non-motorized full access to the areas of disturbance concern.

Citizens for Balanced Use (CBU) requests the Kootenai National Forest to take a hard look at the study at the following link.

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0167259>

By ignoring the best available science in their decision to close thousands of acres to snowmobiling without consideration of non-motorized disturbance, this decision is both arbitrary and capricious.

Another important study involving real time data using heart monitors on elk in Yellowstone National Park completed by Ward, A.L. and J.J. Cupal. showed elk were disturbed twice as much from non-motorized passer bys as from motorized. Longer elevated heart rates and further flight distance resulted from non-motorized users. All wildlife has been acclimated to motorized vehicles and become accustomed to both the sound and presents of motor vehicles. Wildlife pays little attention to this use yet the Kootenai National Forest has wrongfully targeted the snowmobile user as the leading cause of disturbance.