

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/17/2023 6:00:00 AM

First name: Forrest

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Organization: Wyoming State Trails Program

Title: Program Manager

Comments: RE: Green Union ProjectDear Tanner: The Wyoming State Trails Program (WSTP) administers the Wyoming Snowmobile Program and the Off-Road Recreational Vehicle (ORV) Program and is committed to providing responsible management of motorized recreation and the enhancement of snowmobile and ORV/OHV use through our grant funding and on-the-ground construction/maintenance partnerships. WSTP is supportive of this proposed project since it will certainly be beneficial to sustaining long-term forest health. However, we do have some concerns about potential impacts to the operation of snowmobile and ORV trails within the project area which, hopefully, can be averted through close interagency coordination as your proposed project progresses. Our specific concerns include:

1. The Proposed Action mentions "... decommission and rehabilitate unauthorized user created routes ..." Since the Shoshone National Forest has yet to sign off on a Travel Management Plan decision - a planning process which has now been in-progress for nine years - we believe it would be premature and improper for the Forest to move forward with decommissioning any user created routes until the Travel Plan is finally adopted. Many of these routes have been proposed by WSTP and/or the public to be added to the motorized trail system. In particular and at a minimum, it is our position that absolutely no routes which have been proposed to become managed as 'open' motorized travel routes by either previous WSTP comments and/or have been proposed to be classified as 'open' within any of the previously proposed Travel Plan's alternatives should be closed under the guise of the Green Union project. Their future disposition must coincide with a final Travel Plan decision.
2. There are many miles of both snowmobile trails and ORV trails located within this project area. WSTP works hard to provide credible trail maps for both activities on an annual basis. Our maps are available in both a printed and electronic format to help guide safe and responsible recreational use in open areas of the Forest. Consequently, it will be essential that project managers work closely with our Program well in advance of when treatments will actually occur within project units - so that annual trail maps show only trail routes which can be safely used during each applicable activity. For the ORV trails map, we need to know 'open and available' routes (as well as any new 'closed' areas) by March 1 of each year - for trails and areas typically used by wheeled vehicle recreation through the end of fall. For the Snowmobile trails map, this means we need to know 'open and available' routes (as well as any new 'closed' areas) by September 1 of each year - for trails and areas used by over-snow vehicles (OSVs) from December through April of the following year. So, if there will be any 'winter operations' within the overall project area, it is critically important that we know defined operating boundaries and routes since cross-country OSV is generally permitted across most areas of the Forest in the project's vicinity.