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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Nezperce-Clearwater National Forest

Thank you for your work on the Forest Plan, I appreciate you removing the two sections of the Great Burn RWA allowing snowmobiles and bicycle use in those areas. I truly appreciate the 150 foot corridor for the state line trail 738 and appreciate your efforts to work with the Lolo National Forest with regards to the Snowmobile use areas and continued bicycle access on the 738 State Line Trail. As someone who has spent so much time in this area on a bicycle and on a snowmobile in winter it is truly appreciated.

The Great Burn RWA is an extraordinary place. I first rode a Bicycle in this area in the early 1980s and have spent more time in this area with my friends and family while they were on horseback so this is no way directed in a negative way to equestrian. It feels discriminatory to allow horses and not allow bicycles. A bicycle is human powered does no more trail damage than hikers nor equestrian and from experience I can tell you on the 738 trail it gets pushed almost as much as it gets ridden. In my case the bicycle is my horse as I am severely allergic to horses. It feels discriminatory to allow horses for hunting the back country and not allow a bicycle.

The paragraph below was taken from the Congressional Language from October 19, 1980 Rattlesnake National Recreation Area and Wilderness in the State of Montana so Congress Never intended bicycles to be banned from Wilderness.

SECTION 1. (a) The Congress finds that-

(1) certain lands on the Lolo National Forest in Montana have high value for watershed, water storage, wildlife habitat, primitive recreation, historical, scientific, ecological, and educational purposes. This national forest area has long been used as a wilderness by Montanans and by people throughout the Nation who value it as a source of solitude, wildlife, clean, free-flowing waters stored and used for municipal purposes for over a century, and primitive recreation, to include such activities as hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, fishing, horse riding, and bicycling;

Bicycles were banned in an arbitrary decision in the very early 1980s see below.

Taken from an article in the Spokesman Review August 25th 1983 with a head line that reads "Agency wants bikes kept out of wilderness" " Mechanical devices are difficult to define so we arbitrarily drew the line right around bicycles"

The Agency could not define a bicycle as Mechanical Transport as their own 1966 definition below describes Mechanical Transport as "propelled by a nonliving power source". See below.

(36CFR Sec. 293.6)

(a)Mechanical transport, as herein used, shall include any contrivance which travels over ground, snow, or water on wheels, tracks, skids, or by floatation and is propelled by a nonliving power source contained or carried on or within the device.

My point in this is bicycles should not be banned from any trail that allows equestrian, our bicycles are just our horses. I have hunted, bike packed, fished and most importantly cleared hundreds if not thousands of miles of trail for all users by bicycle.

Regards snowmobile use in the Great Burn, the area we snowmobile has been mapped out and submitted, it is a small portion of the Great Burn RWA. Snowmobiles leave no trace that they have been there when the snow melts, the 2012 Planning rule does not require the FS to ban snowmobiles from the Great Burn RWA. There is no scientific data that gives any reason to ban snowmobiles from the Great Burn RWA. I am not sure why the forest plan does not allow snowmobiles to Fish Lake but allows summer motorized. At the very minimum this should be changed to allow snowmobiles to Fish Lake. It is an old Road and there is evidence of past logging in close proximity to Fish Lake.

Thank you for your time