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Comments: This is my Comment on the Lolo National Forest, Forest Plan 2024

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I truly love the backcountry around Missoula and while I explored many areas the State Line west of Missoula was where I spent most of my time, backpacking, hiking, fishing, hunting, bicycling and bikepacking with my friends and family while they were on horseback. I have a severe allergy to horses so a bicycle has been my horse. ( we are looking for the same experience as equestrian in these areas) I first road a mountain bike from the Schley trail head to Kid lake in the 1980s and from that time forward I used a bicycle to explore, fish alpine lakes in the Great Burn and to access hunting areas and retrieve downed game when ness. I used my bicycle to get to hunting camp with my friends up Straight Creek from the late 80s thru the mid-nineties. I rode my bike on several memorial rides for Tom Sherry, I was the only bicycle with 19 horses and 2 mule's from Hoodoo Pass to the Hole in the Wall Lodge for the original July 1991 Tom Sherry Memorial Ride. Part of the original group made several more Memorial rides along the State Line From Hoodoo to the Hole In the Wall, from Fish Lake to Hoodoo Pass, on my bicycle I accompanied my friends and family that were on Horseback. It is impossible for me to convey in this comment what being able to access the trails in the Great Burn both Idaho and Montana has meant to me personally. I continue to bike with my Friends and family while they are on Horseback to this day. Clark Kinney along with Debbie Moran (Clarks oldest Daughter) and others have helped carry our saws and tools into Lionhead each year for our annual Lionhead Trail Maintenance weekend. Tammy Schusted A friend that now lives in Deerlodge with her stock has also been a integral part of trail maintenance in the Centennials, Lionhead and the West Big Hole. I am guessing some of you at the Lolo may know Tammy as she was on the Nine Mile District for a few years. I know there are still folks around that say bikes and horses don't belong on the same trails, this is a s far from the truth as one can get 40 years of riding with horses and not one mishap. Clark has put on several bike horse safety clinics here in Bozeman ( he saw what they were doing in the EU) and adopted this strategy to help both the bike community and equestrian community come together. We had folks from the Gallatin National Forest and the Caribou Targhee National Forest at least one of the events. At an even in 2016 the Caribou Targhee National Forest Ashton and Dubois Idaho District came up to give us an award for 12 years of Dedicated Volunteer service on the Trails in Lionhead and their Districts.

Bicycles are truly the Back Country Horseman of the Future. I am guessing bicycle groups nationwide maintain as many miles of trail in a year as all other user groups together. Southwest Montana Mountain Bike Alliance formerly adopted the CDT single track and approach trails from Yellowstone National Park to Monida Pass, (with the exception of Hell Roaring Creek) approx. 200 miles total. We love our back country trails.

This next statement is in no way derogatory to equestrian as we can coexist, not one more inch of trail that is open to equestrian should be closed to bicycles. Wilderness may be the highest and best use of the land for Existing Wilderness but adding more is not the Highest and best use for the land. Adding more Wilderness is not for the greater good. The Forest Service has many tools to add a layer of protection to the land if is so needed, a backcountry designation can be tailored to specific areas. The 2001 Roadless rule protects the same areas. The 2012 planning rule does not require the Forest Service to remove bicycles from an RWA.

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 it appears Congress Never intended bicycles to be banned from Wilderness. (it is ironic that this congressional language allowing bicycles in the Rattlesnake Wilderness was enacted on my birthday and then banned by Region One in 1983)

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 1965-66 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.

Banning bicycles feel discriminatory, banning bicycles from accessing hunting areas and using bicycles to retrieve harvested game while allowing equestrian is discrimination plain and simple.

Please consider leaving the trails in the Great Burn open to Bicycles, Please consider removing RWA areas and replacing them with tailored Back Country Designations.

There are certain trails in the Great Burn Montana side that are truly priceless to the Bike community. The 738 State Line Trail, the North Fork of Fish Creek Trail from Clearwater Crossing to the State line, the Heart Lake Trail are just a select few that are priceless.

With regards to Snowmobiles in the Great Burn, Snowmobiles should be allowed in the, Cedar Log Lakes, Mud Lake, Dalton Lake, Pearl Lake and Heart Lake areas, snowmobile leave no trace when the snow melts. It is some of the best back country snowmobile experience in the lower 48.

Thank you for your time  
Corey Biggers