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First name: William

Last name: Philbern Jr.

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

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William D. Philbern Jr.

Blue Creek Lodge

11682 Highway 149

South Fork, CO. 81154

lodgebluecreek@gmail.com

719-849-3534

Andy Kehler

Deputy Forest Supervisor

Rio Grande National Forest Service

1803 W Highway 166

Monte Vista, CO. 81144

719-852-6200

Judi Perez

Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor

Rio Grande National Forest Service

1803 W Highway 166

Monte Vista, CO. 81144

719-852-6200

Dear Supervisors,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the current regulations pertaining to Over the Snow Vehicle (OSV) usage in the Rio Grande National Forest as well as my opposition to implementing CFR 212.81 Subpart C.

As an avid outdoor enthusiast of winter recreation, a current business owner for the past 50 years, and a stakeholder in the economic vitality of the region, I believe it is crucial to maintain the current regulations without any changes. Winter recreation, including OSV activities, plays a vital role in the economic prosperity of the Rio Grande National Forest area. The revenue generated from these activities sustains local businesses and supports numerous jobs within our communities. It is imperative to keep all current trails and backcountry areas open to OSV use. Limiting access would not only disrupt the recreational experiences of enthusiasts but also have adverse effects on the local economy. Furthermore, decisions regarding forest management should prioritize the best interests of the public rather than catering to special interest groups with radical agendas. Forest Service employees entrusted with making these decisions should prioritize the well-being of the community and the sustainable use of our natural resources. Contrary to misconceptions, OSV usage has minimal impact on vegetation and wildlife in the Rio Grande National Forest. Most wildlife populations have migrated from these areas, and scientific evidence supports the negligible impact of OSVs on the environment.

In conclusion, I urge the National Forest Service to uphold the current regulations concerning OSV usage in the Rio Grande National Forest. By doing so, we can ensure the continued enjoyment of winter recreation, support local economies, and preserve the natural beauty of our forests for future generations. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

William D. Philbern Jr.