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Comments: To: USFS Rio Grande National Forest,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on proposed Winter Travel Management Plan.

I have cross country skied in the areas of Cumbres and La Manga Passes for over 30 years - these are simply magical places for Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing. These types of quiet recreation do not negatively impact other forms of recreation and do not negatively impact wildlife. And so, these types of recreation should be supported and promoted in the planning activities of the National Forest.

I offer these comments on how the USFS can support and promote quiet recreation activities.

1) Compliance with the OSV Rule: The Proposed Action is not in compliance with the Over-Snow Vehicle Rule's "closed unless designated open" framework. All alternatives developed for this EIS must designate and analyze discrete, delineated OSV areas.

2) Minimizing Conflict: To minimize conflicts between OSV use and other winter recreation uses (skiing, snowshoeing, etc.), the Forest Service must consider snow quality, noise impacts, air quality, and public safety. The final OSV plan should not designate high-value non-motorized recreation areas, such as Nordic ski trails and terrain around backcountry yurts for OSV use. Important quiet winter recreation areas on the forest include:

Terrain surrounding the Spruce Hole Yurt, near La Manga Pass,

The terrain surrounding Southwest Nordic Yurts, near Cumbres Pass, including Neff Mountain, Trujillo Meadows, Flat Mountain, and Grouse Creek,

The Chama Chile Classic XC Ski and Snowshoe courses just north of the Colorado border on the northwest side of CO Highway 17.

These are areas that cross country skiers can access from the highway. Snowmobiles have a great range - and so should not dominate these areas that skiers and snowshoers can access. The noise of snowmobiles is a deterrent to many skiers - and so, there should be areas designated for non-motorized travel only.

3) Consideration of minimum snowdepth for OSV use: This is an excellent practical topic. Based on my long experience cross country skiing at Cumbres Pass, 16" is the minimum for safe cross country skiing. Below this height, skiers and snowshoers will run into rocks. So, for snowmobile traffic - 24" is a more practical height. Twelve inches is just too shallow - although I suspect all snowmobilers already know this. The EIS should consider larger depths for minimum snowmobile requirements.

Thank you for your consideration.