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Comments: Recreation: I am a snowmobiler and an avid nordic skier. Most snowmobilers do not understand the impacts they cause to Nordic skiers, and in my experience since most do not nordic ski, they just do not fully comprehend the impact they cause to nordic skiers. This creates the need to separate uses for everyone's enjoyment and safety. This applies to locals, and the visitors that vacation in our public lands that support our winter economies. Without an enjoyable experience, visitors are likely not to return nor recommend to others to vacation in the communities surrounding the Rio Grande Forest. This has the potential to reduce the potential of economic growth during the winter, negatively impacting local businesses.

In my experience, groups of vacationers most times have members that enjoy doing different activities. No stereo type intended; however, the gentleman will typically want to snowmobile and the ladies prefer to ski or snow shoe. With that in mind, it is important to have a variety of recreational activities along corridors and in close proximity to where residents live and visitors lodge.

For example, Big Meadows provides the only access to groomed trail for nordic skiing on the east side of Wolf Creek Pass, noting you need to ski along a groomed "multi-use" trail shared with OSVs, to get to a very small nordic specific loop for skate skiing and classic X-C skiing. Much of the Alberta Lake groomed trails appear to be on private land owned by the Village at Wolf Creek, and is at a very high altitude that is not appropriate for many visitors, high altitude is not ideal for strenuous activity, and there is no beginner terrain.

There should be more nordic ski trails options along this stretch of the Hwy 160 corridor. In contrast, Tucker ponds, Pass Creek, Big Meadows/Lake Fork, Park Creek, Beaver Creek, Willow Creek, West Pinos, Pinos Creek appear to all be OSV areas. This ratio is 2% human powered and 98% OSV.

Skate Skiing is done on a groomed trail surface, with a finer corrugated comb groom than groomed OSV trails. One OSV will destroy a trail groomed for Skate skiing and the set track for classic X-C skiing. The best analogy of this type of damage: A zamboni smooths out the ice rink for ice skating, then a spiked tired vehicle shows up and drives on the ice, resulting in a very poor surface for ice skating. Same applies to one OSV driving on a groomed nordic ski trail, resulting in a damaged trail surface and ruining the skiing experience. Not to mention the many hours of dedicated volunteer labor that groomed the Nordic Ski trail being wasted.

Nordic Ski Groomed Trails provide a 6-10 foot wide fine corduroy groomed surface specifically for Skate Skiing and a 4 foot wide groomed area with set tracks with elbow room for the poling area for Classic (kick and glide) X-C Skiing. This becomes particularly complex on roads that are groomed and also provide OSV access to winter recreation areas. Groomed nordic ski trails cannot exist in designated wilderness areas due to the operation of grooming equipment. Backcountry skiing, breaking trail on x-c skis or just getting out scooting around on multi-use trails are different forms of skiing experiences that do not require a well-maintained groomed trail surface, however, sharing areas with OSV greatly diminishes the quality outdoor experience skiers seek.

Skate skiing is the most intensive aerobic exercise, where your heart is pumping hard and your breathing is at full capacity. Passing an OSV is a very unpleasant experience, both physically and mentally, knowing you just took full deep breaths of noxious exhaust fumes.

Wildlife: At a recent RG Forest meeting many commented they never see wildlife while snowmobiling. However, while skiing, I see wildlife from time to time including elk, bighorn sheep, 2 mountain lion sightings and a lynx. Maybe the noxious fumes and loud machines are sending wildlife to hide or chasing them off to quieter and less disruptive areas? Realizing nordic skiing requires grooming equipment, it is much slower, less frequent and less volume than OSVs.

Public Safety: I visited Big Meadows (BM) last season twice, each time I encountered high speed snowmobilers, once forcing me to step off the trail as it was apparent one of them was not in control and blasted by just 3 feet from me. Both times I skied at BM, when I arrived at the campground that is groomed for nordic skiing, there had been snowmobile tracks on the groomed nordic trail. This is frustrating after driving to the trailhead and skiing in to find the trail was damaged, ruining an anticipated good skate ski experience.

Unfortunately, after years and years of research, there is no evidence or successful model for sharing the same trails between human powered and OSVs. There are very dramatic differences between these two trail users that reasonably justify separating these uses.

Yes, best case is there are paved roads or major terrain features that provide natural boundaries for these uses, which is not always an available option, however, the lack of does not justify allowing OSV everywhere versus designating certain trailheads and areas for human powered recreation.

Though multi-use areas are the go-to and some may need to be provided, they are very typically just dominated by OSVs. The theory that non-motorized and motorized users can safely coexist in the same area, is not rooted in reality. There are no examples where groomed nordic skiing or any human powered recreation successfully coexists with OSVs. Just like Mountain Bikers do not refer to Ride a ATV/motorcycle area, swimming and motorized boating; ice skating and spiked tired vehicles; Pedestrians/bikes and Cars; etc. These are examples of separation of uses being the norm. In Multi-Use areas, human powered recreationists avoid these areas due to conflicts with motorized activities and the real threat to their safety. Designating a multi-use winter recreation trail of area, results I the motorized activity dominating such area including parking lots. There is no safety issue to OSVs from skiers, however, once Monster Trucks have snow tracks, OSV users will share the same public safety concerns.

It is truly misleading for the forest service to suggest a multi-use winter area is safe for human powered recreation. Which study should I reference that clarifies that any human powered versus any motor powered = motor power wins in a collision, in the parking lot, taking over the entire area with noise, noxious fumes, and compaction of the fresh snow. After experiencing close calls (collisions) on trails, I avoid those trails. I am there for peace and quiet, not to be on high alert when I hear a machine approaching, it's stressful, when the reason I went skiing was to exercise and release stress.

Economy: The winter is when tourism is not as robust as the busy summer months, thus there is room to expand the amount of destination winter visitors seeking winter activities, thus improving the local economy. Designating the majority of the forest for OSVs will restrict local communities' and business' ability expand their winter recreation portfolios that would help diversify their fragile winter economies.

Accessible Trails: It will be important to ensure that population centers where residents reside and visitors stay have access to a variety of user specific winter recreation areas. Many families have members that enjoy different types of recreation. Some household members may like the excitement of riding a fast snowmobile and others may enjoy a quiet human powered ski or snowshoe in a non-motorized area. Providing winter areas and trails to accommodate separated specific user groups that are in close in proximity to residents and visitors will provide equity and alternative choices for winter recreation.

Planning for today and the Future: Today's unborn deserve that today's leaders and those in power are making the right decisions to ensure equity and available choices for their future. Today, some providing comments could be dead in 15 years due to age, health issues or accidents. The next generation will then be 5, 10, 15 years old, soon to embark on their own specific winter recreation of choice, only if a variety of choices have been planned and decided appropriately for their generation's equitable enjoyment of the outdoors.

The Rio Grande Forrest staff in charge of formulating the final decision on the eventual inclusions and omissions on the Maps, must consider all the FACTS (not just loud or anger voices) and perspectives (not one user group over another) contained in public comment, public safety, limiting environmental and wildlife impacts, and ensuring planning for future generations that do not have a voice today. The changes and designation of winter recreation areas could take 3-5+ years from now to establish as the norm, while providing an example to other winter communities, and just in time for future generations to benefit from Rio Grandes forward proactive planning and equitable final decision.

Through the entire Winter Travel Management Plan process, the role of the forest service is to be stewards of our public lands for current and future winter recreationists, while protecting critical wildlife habitat and our

environment.