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First name: Jennifer

Last name: Morgan

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Nez Perce-Clearwater NF Proposed Action for Forest Plan Revision

While I am not what you would consider an extreme snowmobile rider, my family and I have snowmobiled in the Lolo Pass and Beaver Ridge (Great Burn) areas for many years. We enjoy the beautiful outdoors together as a family. We also ride on the groomed trails. In all the years of riding, we have never encountered any wildlife or skiers in the Great Burn area or higher elevations; only other snowmobilers. The snow is too deep for the animals so they are down low. The terrain is too steep and too far from parking for skier and hikers. Skiers and hikers are on the groomed trails and within several miles of the parking lot. Any skiers we have encountered more than 3 miles from the parking lot have arrived on a snowmobile and then skied. We don't interfere with any other types of winter sports enthusiasts as we are going to areas where they don't. Snowmobiles leave no sign of being there when the snow melts. We, as part of, and through our local snowmobile club, do many forms of community service in the areas we ride. We pick up litter, assist the cross-county ski club, hold many fundraisers benefiting many important charities, teach young snowmobiles proper ethics for snowmobiling and general good values, and assist in the rescue of fellow snowmobilers, as well as other outdoor recreationists.

Our family spends many nights each winter at the Lolo Lodge and Hot Springs, and have had many meals at the Lochsa Lodge, Lolo Hot Springs and The Lumberjack. We purchase gas at Roper's and the Lochsa Lodge. We have met many other snowmobilers who came to the area from near and far. They all bring a great amount of money to the local economy.

If this area is closed, you will force all winter recreationists into a small area which will only increase conflict. It will have a detrimental effect on the economy. The Great Burn area is a very fun and challenging place to ride for a diverse group of abilities. It is one of the few areas around left to ride. There is absolutely no reason that this area cannot remain open to all winter recreationists as it historically has been. There is no reason we cannot all share. It is quite unnerving to me that the very people who preach kindness, sharing and respect for all are the ones trying to exclude certain classes of recreationists. I enjoy many recreating experiences from skiing, sledding, hiking, camping, biking, snowmobiling, fishing, snowshoeing, boating, and just plain being outdoors. The area should be open to all. No one person or group's preference is better than others. How various recreationists choose to get where they are going is a personal decision. We are not asking to open up more areas, only to keep what is already established. Please do the right thing and respect the rights of all. I support the creation of Special Management Areas within the wilderness area that would continue to allow over the snow motor vehicle use in historic riding areas.

Thanks for your consideration.

Jennifer J Morgan

PO Box 3675

Missoula, MT 58806

406-531-5827

jjmorgan@montana.com

Jennifer J. Morgan

Vice President

Advant Edge Marketing

PO Box 3675

Missoula, MT 59806

406-531-5827

jjmorgan@montana.com