

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/5/2016 7:00:00 AM

First name: Mike

Last name: Edwards

Organization: Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Association

Title:

Comments: Colville Forest Plan Revision

The website for submitting comments on the Colville Forest Plan seems to be down. I was instructed to submit the plan to this e-mail address.

Overall the plan looks great and well thought out. I fully support alternative P with 2 changes in the area designations.

My comments are attached. If you have questions, I can be reached at 208-890-7852.

Thanks,

Mike Edwards

Amy Dillon, Forest Plan Revision Team
Colville National Forest, Colville Supervisor's Office
765 South Main. Colville, Washington 99114

Dear Ms. Dillon and the Forest Management Plan Revision team,

I would like to thank you and the rest of the management team for your hard work and thoughtful approach to balancing the ecologic recreational and land use needs in Colville National Forest Plan Revision. And I truly appreciate this opportunity to comment on the plan.

As an avid mountain biker and past President of Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Association (SWIMBA)(current board member and lead trail builder), I've had the opportunity to ride in many areas and have commented on many Forest Plans and Travel Plans as well as participating as the past co-chair of the Boise Forest Coalition. This plan revision and the approach taken in Alternative P has done a remarkable job of balancing regulator protection of sensitive areas while allowing mountain biking to continue through the use of "special interest area" land management designation.

My wife and I along with friends from Boise, Idaho have made several trips to the Kettle Crest area to mountain bike as part of the annual Kettle Fest put on by Evergreen Mountain Biking Alliance. During these trips we've all experienced the wonderful unique riding experience offered in this area. The scenic views, epic distance rides and wilderness character make this such a wonderful place to ride and enjoy. It's a place we all plan to come back to again and again. As testament to our appreciation we all put down our bikes and dedicate a day to working with the Forest Service on trail maintenance. To show our support of the economic viability of the local communities most of us try and buy our groceries and gas locally as well as go out for dinner and breakfast in the local eateries.

As the word on the quality and variety of mountain biking in the area is spreading it is becoming a riding destination which may one day rivaling Rossland B.C., Oakridge Oregon, McCall Idaho, and Fruita Colorado. As these communities have experienced, the economy begins to recover and thrive along with new individuals and business moving to the area with a mind set to help in the development and maintenance of the trail system. The FLMs in these areas gain support and assistance from the local trail building organizations like Kootney Columbia Trails Society (Rossland), Greater Oakridge Area Trails (Oakridge), Central Idaho Mountain Biking Association (McCall), Colorado Plateau Mountain Biking Trail Association (Fruita). As proof to the begins of this Evergreen, Lake City Trails (Coeur d' Alene) North Shore Trail builders (B.C.), SWIMBA and individuals from mountain biking organizations as well as Back Country Horseman are already pitching in to help with trail maintenance.

I believe alternative P is a very thoughtful and well balanced approach in balancing motorized and non-motorized recreational access, ecological integrity, and regional economic resiliency. However I believe with a few modifications it can be an even better plan that will further the economic viability and resilience of the local communities maintain the existing and historic recreational use while assisting the Forest Service with trail maintenance without degradation the ecological viability. I would propose two changes to the plan.

1.The Abercrombie Mountain #117 and Silver Creek trails #119 should be removed from recommended wilderness, and instead designated as backcountry, or another special interest area. The Abercrombie and Silver Creek loop should be preserved for mountain bikers as this high alpine riding experience cannot be replicated elsewhere in WA and is a dwindling opportunity throughout Idaho and the Western United States. This would simply cut a pie shape out of the current wilderness area. Mountain biking is a non-conforming use under the wilderness designation which will preclude mountain biking from occurring in the future if the wilderness designation should occur. These two trails have long been used by mountain bikers and have not degraded the wilderness character or interfered with the hikers and equestrians experiences. Changing the designation to backcountry or special interest area will also not interfere with the trail classification. The fact the area is still compatible with the Forest Service proposing the area as wilderness is proof the historic use of biking has not interfered with the wilderness character or the diverse ecology of the area. To designate this area as wilderness will deprive the local communities of economic benefits, increase the maintenance costs (mountain bikers will no longer be assisting with trail maintenance) and not improve the wilderness character.

2.The proposed Bald/Snow/White wilderness designation eliminates a contiguous Kettles Crest riding experience, as well as connection to Thirteen Mile Trail. Bald/Snow/White should be included in the Special Interest Area. This unifies all of the Kettle Crest under one management designation and preserves the unique north-south Crest riding experience, as well as un-interrupted access to the Pacific Northwest Trail. This can be accomplished by changing the Coyote Mountain/Hoodoo roadless area to backcountry or special interest area. As mentioned above it also will maintain the wilderness character, ecological diversity and viability, provide economic benefits to the local communities and continue the mountain biker's support in trail maintenance. With the above changes incorporated, I fully endorse Alternative P. It facilitates trail maintenance needs, allows the Kettle Crest to be designated as one uniform management designation. I'm very confident in the Forest Service's ability to manage these changes to alternative P and I'm looking forward to future work with the Colville National Forest. Thank you again for your hard work and opportunity to voice my strong support for maintained mountain bike access to the awe-inspiring trails of the Colville National Forest.

Sincerely,

Mike Edwards