



Anthony Botello  
Forest Supervisor  
Flathead National Forest  
650 Wolfpack Way  
Kalispell, MT 59901

*Flathead Forest Plan Suitability Changes: Winter Travel Management and Recommended Wilderness*

Dear Supervisor Botello,

The following comment is on behalf of Winter Wildlands Alliance members and supporters:

Thank you for implementing the important travel management changes prescribed by the 2018 Flathead Forest Plan. We appreciate the Forest Service's action to prohibit non-conforming recreation uses in Recommended Wilderness Areas. Many people tirelessly advocated for these special places to be protected during the Forest Planning process, and this Environmental Assessment follows through on the commitments that the Forest Service made to the public.

We also commend you for the thoughtful Information and Education strategy outlined in Appendix D. I appreciate the considerable thought the Forest Service has put into preventing OSV use outside of designated areas. However, this should be complemented by an enforcement strategy. In designating new areas for OSV use, the Flathead must do more to minimize impacts to other uses, wildlife, and natural resources than what is currently proposed in the EA. Assuming that non-motorized users will simply adjust to OSV use and/or go elsewhere is not how you minimize impacts between OSV use and other recreational uses - what you're proposing is simply to have OSV use displace non-motorized recreation from areas - like Flattop Mountain - where it currently occurs.

To better understand and minimize impacts to wildlife, the EA should include a finer-scale analysis of potential OSV impacts to winter-dependent wildlife like lynx and wolverine, as the current forest-wide scale is too broad. And, the final plan should include adaptive management measures to close late-season OSV areas early in times of low snow or if bears are documented in the area.

Thank you for your consideration,

H. Dettmering, Columbia Falls MT  
John Dunkum, Missoula MT  
Joan Fouty, Polson MT  
Rochelle Gravance, Columbus MT  
Lizzie Kozar, Columbia Falls MT  
Jill Paul, Billings MT  
Mark Schulein, Livingston MT

Tim Stevens, Livingston MT  
Dan Struble, Livingston MT  
Ruth Swenson, Helena MT  
Joel Vignere, Lakeside MT