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First name: Marc

Last name: Hildesheim

Organization:

Title:

Comments: 4/5/16

Amy Dillon

Forest Environmental Coordinator

& Plan Revision Team Leader

Colville National Forest

765 S. Main Street

Colville, WA 99114

Dear Ms. Dillon,

I am writing in regards to the Draft Revised Forest Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Colville National Forest. I am a member of the Brush Bunch Motorcycle Club, out of Spokane, WA and a longtime recreationalist on the Colville National Forest. My family has enjoyed camping, fishing, snowmobiling, and riding off-highway motorcycles on the land managed by the Colville National Forest since the 1960's.

After careful review of your proposed alternatives for the Forest Plan Revision and DEIS I cannot fully support any of the alternatives as presented. That being said my preferences for the direction of the Forest most closely align with Alternative P, as long as any recommended wilderness areas were removed from the alternative.

As a motorcycle rider and public land enthusiast I am vehemently opposed to any new proposal for wilderness areas on public lands. Although wilderness can only be created by Congress, proposed wilderness areas are often managed with the same restrictions as wilderness, limiting their access to a majority of people who want to enjoy public lands. Nationally only about 5% of National Forest visits are to wilderness areas, which means that wilderness areas serve a very small part of the recreating public.

Expansion of wilderness would also be harmful to the small communities surrounding the Colville National Forest. The Western Governors Association (WGA) along with the Outdoor Industry Association conducted a study in 2012 that found that the 19 participating Western States, including Washington, spend \$64.6 billion on outdoor recreation every year. This figure includes a mix of motorized and non-motorized activities, but the point is that people in the Western States spend a lot of money on outdoor recreation.

When you break that figure down further you can figure out how much each user spends per visit. The average motorized visitor to a National Forest spends far more than their non-motorized counterpart. This information is supported by studies conducted by the Forest Service

[http://www.fsl.orst.edu/lulcd/Publicationsalpha\\_files/White\\_Stynes\\_NVUM2010b.pdf](http://www.fsl.orst.edu/lulcd/Publicationsalpha_files/White_Stynes_NVUM2010b.pdf). This means that creating wilderness is a way to bring less money in to local communities than the Forest would by enhancing current OHV opportunities and looking for ways to create new ones. It has also been determined that communities located near wilderness areas are worse off than communities located near Forest Service managed lands that allow motorized recreation. So proposing new recommended wilderness can be seen as harmful to local communities. Another concern is the current state of trails found on Forest Service managed land across the country. In 2012 it was found by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) that the Forest Service has a trail maintenance backlog of \$314 million, which has only grown today because of the shrinking of recreation program budgets and the need to cover wildfire expenses. Proposing wilderness will only add to that backlog, as you will be limiting the number of volunteers capable of providing maintenance and work parties on the Colville National Forest.

Motorized users carry chainsaws and trail building implements on their motorcycles on their machines and clear hundreds of miles of trails every year on the Colville National Forest. The Brush Bunch Motorcycle Club has cleared many of the trails the Forest manages free of charge over the last 50 years. If you recommend wilderness areas, you will lose the support of the Brush Bunch and many other motorized enthusiasts and limit your ability to partner with such organizations in order to try and keep up with the trail maintenance on the Colville National Forest. These partnerships are vital to keeping trails open on the Forest, and these partnerships

were identified by the GAO as necessary to overcoming the current backlog the Forest Service is experiencing. I propose that instead of recommended wilderness you look to provide more management areas like the Kettle Crest Special Interest Area that serve to preserve, enhance, and possibly create new OHV recreation opportunities.

I thank you for your time, and sincerely hope that you will consider removing any recommended wilderness from the final decision on the Forest Plan Revision.

Sincerely,  
Marc Hildesheim