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Organization:

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Comments: Amy Dillon, Forest Plan Revision Team

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Dear Amy and the Forest Management Plan Revision team,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Forest Management Plan Revision. As a mountain biker, this plan is of high importance to me as it will determine mountain bike access for the next 15 years or more.

The riding experience in the Colville National Forest is one that cannot be replaced elsewhere. It truly is a beautiful area with some of the best back-country trails in the region. The last time my wife and I rode in the Kettle Crest area, we saw only a handful of people and there was more than enough room for everyone. At one point during our ride, we were able to stop and watch a black bear swimming across a pond. None of us disturbed the other.

Mountain bikers are traditionally great stewards of the environment and we strongly advocate for the "leave no trace" mentality. We cause minimal trail damage, much less than horses, and are more active than almost any group in volunteer trail maintenance activities. Additionally, we spend money in nearby local communities. For instance, we went into Republic to gas up our vehicle, and purchase supplies, ice, etc. The economic impact to nearby communities is quite positive with the longer-term potential of attracting mountain bike tourism being unrealized to date.

I commend you for your thoughtful approach and thoroughness of the draft plan and preferred alternative.

Alternative P is a good solution for both motorized and non-motorized recreational access, ecological integrity, and regional economic resiliency. However, two highly valued mountain bike trail systems would be lost due to proposed wilderness designations in Alternative P. For this reason, I strongly encourage you to implement the following two changes to the plan:

*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 SIA. 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 wilderness.

*The Abercrombie Mountain and Silver Creek trails should be removed from recommended wilderness, and instead designated as backcountry, or another SIA. The Abercrombie and Silver Creek loop should be preserved for mountain bikers as this high alpine riding experience cannot be replicated elsewhere in WA.

With the above changes incorporated, I fully endorse Alternative P. It facilitates trail maintenance needs with chainsaws, allows the Kettle Crest to be designated as one uniform management designation, in turn making it easier to promote and market it as a MUST VISIT contiguous geological, ecological, and recreational destination!

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,

Andy Morsell

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho