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Comments: 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,

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

I am mostly concerned with preserving mountain bike access through the use of Special Interest Area designation. While I do enjoy wilderness and wilderness study areas these areas within the Colville National Forest would be better managed for non-motorized recreation as an SIA. I have enjoyed mountain bike and hiking on the Colville and would like to keep those opportunities available in the future. The riding experience in the Kettle Crest and Abercrombie Mountain/Silver Creek areas is one that cannot be replaced elsewhere.

The extensive trail networks in the Colville National Forest offer the key ingredients required for multi-day mountain bike riding experiences. The region as a whole has great potential to become a national riding destination. This promises low-impact non-motorized trail use and significant economic benefit for communities in Northeast Washington. The ecological and trail resources make this Forest a unique place to ride, and it is of utmost importance to me that mountain bike access is maintained and improved throughout the implementation timeframe of the next Forest Management Plan.

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:

1.) 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.

2.)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,
Rocco Altobelli