

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/30/2016 4:06:37 PM

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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 unique. While I have not ridden in the area yet, reading about the area has inspired my interest and I would hate to have the opportunity to experience it taken away. The best way to preserve an area is to allow limited access so that people can see what they are protecting.

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:

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 designation, and instead be 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.

Also, when you allow access for mountain biking, you bring in a group of people who bring time and resources into trail maintenance. You will increase the pool of volunteers available to maintain the trails.

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,

Roger Burton