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Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Colville National Forest and specifically the Kettle Crest area provide a mountain biking experience that is unique in Washington State.

Riding the area's trails makes for incredible multi-day mountain biking trips that are as desirable as any in the nation. Non-motorized trail use in all forms promises significant economic benefit for communities in Northeast Washington. It is important that mountain bike access be maintained to these trails.

Among the alternatives considered I strongly feel that alternative P is a good solution to provide both motorized and non-motorized recreational access, protect environmentally sensitive areas, and provide an opportunity to strengthen the local economy. Of concern to me however is that two important mountain bike riding opportunities would be eliminated through the proposed wilderness designations in Alternative P. To prevent this, I support the following changes to this alternative:

The proposed Bald/Snow/White wilderness designation breaks up the signature us Kettles Crest mountain biking experience, also eliminating the 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.

These changes will also ease the burden of trail maintenance by allowing chainsaws. In an era of dwindling Forest Service trail budgets and a greater reliance on partnerships with volunteer groups, making sure those groups have the most efficient tools available to them will benefit the trails of the area.

I urge you to implement Alternative P with the above changes for the long-term benefit of the Colville National Forest and its visitors.