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Organization:

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Comments: Colville National Forest Plan

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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. I have visited the Colville National Forest and particularly the Kettle Crest Trail many times over the last ten years. The trails offer well built solitude and I have never run into many users up there. In fact I have had more incidents with cattle than humans along the crest. I typically travel over 3 hours to use the Colville National Forest. I spend money locally in Kettle Falls and Colville. I agree with protecting the area more, but not at the sacrifice of mountain bikers. I feel breaking up the Kettle Crest with wilderness will decrease use, but not in any way that helps the area seeing as there are other users that cause huge damage. Cattle rip the trail up, horses damage and cause erosion. Mountain bikers make great contributors to local economy and breaking up the Crest will greatly decrease the quality of this forest.

The Abercrombie Mountain area is a great destination as well. Being a peak of prominence, it is one of the best destinations we can go ride that gives such an exposed feel. The beautiful views and technical trail stop riders from traveling too fast. It seems like a shame to give up a destination that is used by Americans and Canadians.

Some of my favorite Mountain bike trails will be impacted by the new plan and I would hope that the Colville National Forest Management Plan Revision team will reconsider these Wilderness areas.

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, 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,

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