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Organization:

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Colville Forest Management Plan Revision team,
The 4th of July seemed like a good time to write.

Thank you for your hard work in sifting through the competing demands of forest stakeholders. Achieving balance is never easy !

Although I live near Seattle, I had never been out to the Colville area until our bicycling club started holding an annual campout at Sherman Pass near Republic. It's been so wonderful that I have gone back almost every year since 2009. The riding in what we call the Kettle Crest is unique in Washington State. And now I've seen and experienced the town of Republic and driving home through the Colville Indian Reservation in the setting sun. It's been a magical place for me but my I wouldn't be out here if it weren't for the incredible bicycling.

As you can imagine I was a bit dismayed when I found out this riding experience could be threatened by a well-meaning but mis-guided push towards Federally designated Wilderness. What's magic about this area is being able to camp centrally and access so many lengthy, contiguous trail networks.

The proposed Bald/Snow/White wilderness designation would not allow riding the contiguous Kettle Crest trail and eliminate a connection to Thirteen Mile Trail. This area would be better served by designating as par of the proposed Special Interest Area (SIA). This would provide better management as well since the entire area would be under one management designation.

In addition the Abercrombie Mt. and Silver Creek trails should not be imprisoned by Wilderness. They should be designated as backcountry or another SIA.

If those changes are made, then I think Alternative P is the best solution for this great area. It maintains the wildness of the area and all the great things that all recreationists enjoy without the draconian restrictions (such as no motorized trail maintenance) and permanent closure to my wonderful life affirming sport of mountain biking that Wilderness would entail.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Bob Bournique