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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Increase trail access in Colville National Forest

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July 4, 2016

Dear Colville National Forest Plan Revision Team,

I'd like to thank the forest service for all their work and for the opportunity to comment on the revised Colville National Forest Plan. This plan will be very important to creating a sustainable future for outdoor recreation in Northeastern Washington.

The Preferred Alternative (Alternative P) is good for the area's ecological health while balancing recreation most needs. However, I believe it falls short in providing enough recreation resources and closes some important trails to the mountain biking community and I feel these adjustments need to be made for the plan to truly balance recreation needs and the conservation needs for the area.

-The Bald/White/Snow proposed wilderness should be changed and included in the SIA. This supports a consistent and single management designation for all of the Kettle Crest, and should simplify management by designating the entire Crest as one coherent recreational and geological resource.

-The Abercrombie Mountain and Silver Creek trails should be removed from recommended wilderness designation. The Abercrombie Peak and Silver Creek loop ride is unlike any other in the State, and it should be preserved for mountain bikers. Wilderness designation could be preserved for land surrounding the trail corridor, as long as mountain biking and chain saw maintenance is allowed on the trail itself. This trail sees very light usage and it is far from major population centers, it is a truly unique riding experience for cyclists. It is becoming increasingly rare to have these remote back country rides accessible for mountain biking and it is of the utmost importance to preserve access to the very few rides like this in the state.

The trails we are asking to be removed from the wilderness corridors would not impact the connectivity of wildlife corridors and still offers the habitat protection to these areas that we all care so much about.

The impact of closing these areas and trails to cycling however would be devastating to back country cyclists. We would lose access to classic long distance loops we have enjoyed and cared about for many years. Please consider protecting these areas using The Recreation Special Interest Area (SIA) as it is a good designation to protect natural resources and recreational access. It's good for hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers. It promotes human and equestrian recreation while allowing modern mechanized tools to keep the trails in the condition users have come to expect.

Thank you so much for your time and I hope these minor adjustments can be made to accommodate the human powered recreation community while providing the protections this beautiful area deserves.

Sincerely,
Kyle Funke