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First name: John

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Forest Management Plan Revision. This plan is of high importance to me as it will determine my ability to access these resources for the next 15 years or more.

The mountain biking experience in the Colville National Forest is one that cannot be replaced elsewhere. I regularly travel to the area and find that the very low use allows for many types of access to occur without undue impact to the resources. I also find that user conflicts are not an issue. The ability to ride for several days without seeing other trail users is not one that exists elsewhere in the state. The Cascades lack a high alpine trail network that permits Mountain Biking. I implore you to preserve this access in the Colville.

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 an international riding destination. This promises low-impact non-motorized trail use and significant economic benefit for communities in Northeast Washington. The reduction in resource extraction (especially from Federal lands) has crippled the local economy and recreational tourism is key to maintaining the quality of life in the region. 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. The boundaries of the Bald/Snow/White wilderness area should be amended, and the Kettles crest 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 uninterrupted 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,

John W. Small PLA

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