

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/9/2017 2:11:11 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: GMUG Forest Plan - Assessment Comments

Dear GMUG Forest Planning Team:

This comment is in regard to Recreation Assessment and the 9th Circuit Court/Judge Bush Ruling. My understanding is that unless a previous Winter Management Plan is in existence, then all National Forests are ruled by the 2005 ruling: Winter Motorized users are required to follow same regulations for Summer Motorized Usage in terms of designated roads and trails. I attended a Forest Planning Meeting in Montrose in 2002 where I was one of four parties with an appeal to the Plan. In attendance were Jim Free, Jeff Burch, Lou French, Jim Stephenson, Howard Green, Thomas McKenny, and others. My appeal to the USFS was that their plan absolutely did not address Winter Travel Management. I was told by Lou French in front of everyone at the meeting, that if I withdrew my appeal, the summer management plan would move forward and I would not hold up the Summer Management Plan. In good faith, I believed Lou French but from that point forward I was completely unsuccessful in ever getting the USFS to return to the table to discuss OSV in the Winter for the GMUG. For this, it is my belief and understanding that there is no Winter Management Plan. If there are maps, etc for Winter Usage that are being presented as a Winter Plan, I would argue these plans were developed without public input, and are therefore invalid and noncompliant with the 9th Circuit Court Ruling. I am in contact with Winter Wildlands Alliance out of Boise, Idaho. My main point is to protect historic, quiet use ski/snowshoe areas. The two areas that are of concern which have been in existence long before snowmobiles are the Red Mountain Pass area and the North Side of the Sneffels Range. The Red Mtn Pass has a Winter Plan, so that is not my concern. My concern is as it has always been: The North Side of the Sneffels Range. That being said, I recognize the significance of historic and established Snowmobile areas such as the Uncompahgre Plateau, Lone Cone, Beaver Park, and Owl Creek Pass. I find it legitimate to state that these are uncontested snowmobile areas.

I hope you will consider updating the information in your assessment report to provide a more detailed picture of Recreation on the GMUG forest prior to the scoping period.

Sincerely,

Joe Ryan
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