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First name: Stephen

Last name: Kidder

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

This is a letter I'm writing in opposition to the stripping of OSV riding areas. It has come to my attention that this change in designation is due to huge funding from private interest groups. Tailoring to a private interest groups as a government entity should be the last thing you consider.

Here's little about me; I don't own a snowmobile, I'm an avid backcountry skier and have my guiding license from the AGA. I am active in protecting the environment and spend most of my summers/winter cleaning up my wild lands.

I feel like a large reason why people are trying to ban OSV is due to backcountry skiers claiming it is unsafe or that the backcountry is being ruined. Not once in my 30+ years of skiing have I found this to be true. I have heard of exactly 0 skier VS snowmobile collisions or confrontations in the backcountry. I don't have to find snowmobiles for the summit or for fresh power on the way down. In fact having snowmobiles is a huge safety net for me should I become injured, I could hail another backcountry user for help back to my car. NO I do not feel like the serenity is ruined when I hear another person or machine enjoying the backcountry. The private interest groups have misled you to get their agenda furthered. Respectfully; I don't feel like your organization (forest service) should be used as a pawn.

The second reason these private interest groups are citing is the environmental impact, I have yet to see any environmental impact from OSV use in the backcountry. Yes the trailheads can be crowded and the starts of some big trailheads can dig down to dirt. But these trailheads are usually onto of established roads. A human powered backcountry users impact isn't far behind a OSV. And by far the biggest polluter is the summer tourist who takes their whole family out on a hike and leaves trash while feeding wildlife and destroying our wildlands. Considering banning tourists entirely from these lands and all the revenues that come with it before you still users of their user rights.

Currently human powered users can go anywhere they want on public lands. This hasn't been true for snowmobile users for 50+ years and you want to strip the OSV crowd of this access to tailor to a group of users that have always had free rein. That doesn't make sense. Please stop this fiasco. Stripping usage rights from one group to further a private interest groups agenda is not what the forest service is for.