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Organization: Sweet Grass County Recreation Associated

Title: President

Comments: As the president of the Sweet Grass county recreation association located here in Big Timber I am writing on behalf of the snowmobile club in support of Alternative A. We have had great interaction with the Forest Service and the FWP receiving grants and working with the agencies to maintain our trail system in the winter. With more and more people getting involved with the sport it adds more dollars that the clubs can get to maintain its trails. I do not want to see much of a change.

We do understand that as more and more people move to Montana there will be more users in the Forest. Those are growing pains, the same ones our ancestors had and the same ones I have today. I fear that if we close down more area to motorized use we will have less opportunity for the next generation and have bigger crowds on the ground that's left. Bigger crowds create more impact on smaller areas. If we can stay with what we have that will help.

As far as a middle ground of the "back country" area to me that is a gateway to wilderness. What happens if there is now a road going to a certain area and a bridge wash out. If I understand the back country language as such, we would not be able to go in and fix the existing road. If the bridge is out, there is not way to get back to the area, might as well be wilderness.

Economic reason:

I have not seen any studies or charts but I do firmly believe that motorized users spend four dollars for every dollar a non-motorized user spends in the local economies. If we reduce the area's that these people can go the communities will suffer. This includes both summer and winter traffic. In the winter, Cooke City is single handedly kept alive with motorized recreationalist. There are certain areas in Big Sky and West Yellowstone that I would say the same for. Not to mention the 3 large dealerships in the Bozeman area that employ dozens of people to support their families.

As a middle ground why is there not more recognition or advocacy for the land that is already in wilderness. That is my alternative, leave the land that is open now open and direct more advocacy towards the pristine wilderness areas that exist today.