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Comments: With regards to the Clearwater N.F. plan revision, I support a management alternative that provides for more access to NF lands, not less.

With regards to RWA's I do not believe that the USFS has the legal right or mandate to manage those lands in the same manner as congressionally designated wilderness. I understand that the USFS is obligated to monitor existing wilderness character in those areas, and to manage those areas in such a way that does not degrade any "wilderness character" that presently exists. However, science would suggest that considering that motorized/mechanized activities such as snowmobiling & mountain biking have been allowed in the RWA's in the past, and the RWA's still possess wilderness character, one can only conclude that those activities have not been detrimental to wilderness character. Given this fact, I believe that motorized/mechanized activities that have been allowed in those areas in the past, should continue to be allowed in those areas, regardless of RWA status. I don't think it really matters if the boundaries of an existing RWA is expanded, contracted, or stays the same, as long as motorized/mechanized activities that have been allowed in those areas in the past, continue to be allowed in those areas. The CNF should understand that people who access the RWA's via motorized or mechanized means, value the wilderness character that exists in those areas, and the solitude that can be found in those areas, just as much as people who access the RWA's on foot or horseback. The motorized/mechanized users don't want to see that character eroded or solitude lost any more than other users.

On the subject of the diversity of users in the RWA's it should be noted that there is no documented user conflict between the motorized/mechanized users and other people recreating in those areas. Many of the users that choose to ski or snowshoe in those areas, access the areas with a snowmobile to pursue those activities. Horses and mountain bikes occasionally meet on a trail, the mountain bikes step off below the trail, there is an exchange of greetings as the horses pass, and both groups continue to enjoy the character and solitude that the area provides. No conflict exists!

Another factor that should be considered in this management decisions is that there is absolutely not scientific evidence that mechanized/motorized activities in the RWA's of the CNF are in any way detrimental to wildlife, including those species listed and threatened or endangered under the ESA, or any ESA "species of concern". Given this fact, in combination with the previously illustrated fact that the previously existing motorized/mechanized uses in those areas have not been detrimental to "wilderness character", I believe the USFS is obligated to continue to allow those uses in RWA's.

In closing, I want to say that I grew up in Idaho, and spent almost 20 years working, hiking, snowmobiling, mountain biking, and riding horses all over the Clearwater National Forest. I believe it is important that the people responsible for managing the CNF understand that the vast majority of people recreating on the CNF, both in RWA's and other areas, want more access to their National Forest lands, not less. That vast majority is also willing to accept that different people use those lands in different ways, and maintain a respect for each others uses and value of those lands, no matter what they are. There are only a small but vocal few that want to use forest planning and resulting management to exclude other forest users from forest lands, and "protect" those lands for themselves. I would request that land managers on the CNF not be fooled by the vocal few into thinking that their views of forest management reflect the views of the vast majority. I sincerely hope that the CNF planning process will result in more access to national forest lands for all user groups, and not less.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and for your consideration of the comments I have provided.

Todd Butts