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First name: Mt. State Representative Denley

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I would like to thank you for your great coverage and meetings you have had to get the public involvement. This is a very complex issue due to the social pressure you have to consider. We should not ever manage lands or animals by emotion and sentiment but by the same token economic exploitation should also not be a management driver. You have the job of balancing that fine line.

I have always said, we have lands that are classified as Wilderness or even Wilderness study but by putting that classification on the landscape and maps, we actually can cause that land to be loved to death. I also realize some of those lands are not suitable for timber production and have recreation values that should be preserved. I will not get specific in the area locations but rather with the values on the ground. I would like to see the alternative where the RWA classification be dropped from consideration but rather classify the area as a semi primitive motorized area. By doing this, snowmobiling would and should be allowed as well as snow bikes and mountain bikes. With an ageing population and the new e-bikes, these should also be allowed. Just as in timber management, the recreation activities may have some limitations of activities due to unsuitable terrain which should be considered but not just by social restraints. By classifying the area RWA, you are actually creating a de-facto wilderness and we have seen this study area go on too long.

I do not agree with all the area being referred to as the Hoodoo area. I used to cross country ski the Hoodoo pass area and most locals consider this as the Hoodoo and not the whole area you are considering as the Hoodoo. This may be a bit confusing for some folks commenting. Back in those days of skiing this area, it was never a conflict when I ran into snow mobiles and enjoyed seeing all the people that used the area. In those days, we had a great economic benefit from the use of the area from the pass east by those snowmobiles. We used to see locals and out of state users that came to the area to winter recreate. Unless you go back into the seventies to check into the economics of this use, you will not have a fair assessment of the economic loss to Mineral County by not allowing motorized use to this area. We had a snowmobile shop that was open at that time that had to close when the snowmobiling was shut off in years past. There were also the high number of motel rooms in winter month as well as the increased use of the cafes from the snowmobile users. We need that use back since our county economy is so frail and since the soils show no negatives from the snowmobile use and the wildlife do not see a negative impact since most of the animals winter outside the area and those that are there are not being harassed, unless it might be from the helicopters that fly to look for mechanical violators. I do feel the helicopter use both winter and summer should be stopped in the primitive area. These uses should not destroy or diminish the character of the area.

In attending to your meetings and visiting with your information tables, I see a real need for increased timber management in your study area. The high number of acres that have not been managed for years showed a high volume of timber that can be harvested, which can give a big economic boom for Mineral County. Back in the seventies and eighties we had a saw mill in Superior that shut down partially due to lack of timber. We now have a mill in St. Regis that is always in need of timber so increase logging in the Nez/Clear is a huge benefit to Mineral Counties economy. I saw from your soils people, increased logging showed low negative impact. Your wildlife biologist also showed that wildlife habitat needs more timber management. The health of your forest shows that logging is needed as well as the control of fire needs timber management. With all of these concerns you need to consider a combination of alt. x and alt y. You need to try to look for sustainable yield for the future and look for wildlife benefits as well as the increased recreation opportunities the timber management could enhance.

I stated decisions should not be made on emotion and also not on pure economics but when you can combine what is good for the landscape and get economic benefit, how can you go wrong. With the high percentage of

federal land owned in Mineral County and in the area concerned in Idaho, economics have to come into play. Since pilt monies diminish and secure rural schools is always questionable, the jobs and increased recreation are what will let Mineral County survive. We have already seen the economic cost of shutting the activities in this area down and I hope we can reverse this. I hate to say this but hikers just don't pay the bills plus we do have a lot of hike in lakes in Mineral County that will not be compromised by your decisions.