

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/19/2020 10:48:48 PM

First name: John Scott

Last name: Stiegler

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to submit my comments for the Nez Perce travel plan, specifically the Great Burn and Beaver Ridge areas.

This is a beautiful place for recreationalists to share during all seasons of the year. My primary use is during the winter months on snowmobile. I have yet to experience snowmobilers causing user conflict with other winter recreational types, let alone see other types of winter recreation away from the the lowland areas near the parking lots. The skiers stay quite close to the groomed trails in parking lot areas. They made venture into the backcountry but in 40 years of snowmobiling in a Lolo and Great Burn areas I have yet to see their tracks in the backcountry. There is ample space in room for all recreationalists to have access to this area. The impact by winter recreationalists of all kinds is minimal and GONE once the snow melts the tracks.

During the winter months, we rarely encounter wildlife once we leave the paved roads. It's not uncommon to see large ungulates from our truck as we travel to our riding area to unload. I have occasionally seen mountain goats from my truck at low elevations as we travel to unload at higher elevations. They are very calm and peaceful animals. We stop, roll down the windows, take photos, and enjoy them for several minutes before we drive away. Most of the time we see them again that night on the way back out, in the same place we left them. We do not see tracks or evidence of those animals at higher elevations after we unload our machines from the staging areas. The assertion that snowmobiles are causing animal deaths, specifically mountain goats is absurd and based on no evidence. Please do not let these emotional claims lead you to decisions based on conjecture.

The loss of these riding areas has an effect on the local economy, especially in the smaller towns proximal to these riding areas. The economic impact and loss due to closure of riding areas is quantifiable and substantial to small businesses who provide lodging, restaurants and fuel, etc.

I have yet to see snowmobiles create face-to-face conflict with skiers on the mountain. I have personally witnessed skiers jabbing and poking at snowmobilers while on the designated multiple use trails. I have also seen that same interaction on designated snowmobile trails where there should be no skiers.

When areas like the Great Burn are closed, other areas see increased and unnecessary concentration of varied user-groups. Let's give the winter recreationalists the elbow room that they need to minimize environmental impact and avoid user conflict.

Please select Alternative X for the travel plan revision. Please remove the "Recommended Wilderness Area" status, which should have been done decades ago, according to the provisions of the wilderness study guidelines and allow the public to continue to responsibly snowmobile here during the winter.

Thank you for allowing me to submit my comments.

Thank you,
Scott