

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/20/2020 9:07:42 PM

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Title:

Comments: I am writing in support of re-opening the un-justly closed Great Burn area to snowmobiling. There remains no proof that over-the-snow travel harms any portion of the eco-system, animals or any other conceivable portion of God's snow covered green earth! In fact, it is a wonderful way for families and friends to enjoy God's creation. The snowmobile clubs and associations are filled with people who are good stewards of our back country mountains. They pack out what they pack in, and leave absolutely no trace of their presence... All evidence (tracks) left on the snow disappears with the next snow fall and finally melts away each spring.

I have not had an opportunity, nor the pleasure of snowmobiling in the Great Burn area and would like to show my children and grandchildren this awe inspiring part of God's gift to us. I grew up in Montana, snowmobiling everywhere we could reach with our old, 1970's vintage snowmobiles. But that was not far in comparison to what we can reach with our modern snowmobiles. We can now safely reach deep into the mountains where the snow is so deep that no animal can survive. And, we get there without causing any damage to the environment.

There are folks who think that their right to have places of solitude is more important than my right to enjoy these places. Their insistence has caused RWA's to be treated as if they already are Wilderness Areas. Their insistence on having their rights - has infringed upon my rights! Only Congress can designate Wilderness Areas, so RWA's MUST NOT be turned into de-facto Wilderness Areas! The Great Burn Area and all other RWA's must be governed in a way that allows for historic usages, like snowmobiling. We already have plenty of Wilderness Areas. The Great Burn area should be treated as a primitive use area that allows mechanized over the snow usage.

As far as bothering animals, in January, 2018 I was privileged to snowmobile to an area in Wyoming where Sheep were living off of sparse grass and lichens on the rocks. We snowmobiled to within a hundred yards of them without knowing they were there. Finally one of the riders in our group saw them and we all stopped and took pictures of them laying in the snow near a cliff. They never even got up, but only looked at us as we took pictures. We did not bother them and they were certainly not bothered by our presence.

I was born and raised in Montana, but left after high school to serve our great country. I spent 24 years in the United States Navy flying helicopters in and out of combat zones, ensuring all United States citizens may live in a safe country and pursue their God given right to enjoy freedom. Now, when I have retired from the Navy, went back to school to become a Pastor, and moved back to our beloved Northwest in July, 2012, I find that my rights and my freedom - that I fought to safeguard for all US citizens - even to ride a snowmobile in a safe, environmentally friendly way, are being taken away. It is neither right, nor legally justified to close areas to ANY human use, let alone to eco-friendly snowmobiling. I therefore implore you to do the right thing and allow free citizens to enjoy the mountains that God has made for us, and given to us, for our use.