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Organization:

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Comments: Re: Collaboration information, Hoodoo (Great Burn)

I am writing concerning the proposed alternatives to the Clearwater National Forest plan. The area I'm concerned about is the hoodoo area. I support a no-action alternative that changes the RWA designation to "semi primitive motorized" that allows snowmobile, snow bikes, and mountain biking. Also I do not support the designation of the North Fork Spruce-White Sands and Sneakfoot Meadows as RWA's, due to their lack of wilderness quality, and should be eliminated. I feel like we need to maintain the characteristics of the Great burn by allowing activities that don't diminish their value. I live next to a roadless area that I really enjoy, but doesn't have the same restrictions that RWA's present. As snowmobilers we do not leave a tracks after the snow melts. This is a known fact. I was somewhat concerned when I went to the meeting in Missoula, when I visited with the wildlife folks, their map showed potential snowmobile use in the hoodoo area created by a computer model. That model potential showed a lot more terrain than is feasibly rideable from my knowledge of the terrain, not just based on a computer model. So it makes it look like from the wildlife conservationist side that we are all over the entire range wreaking havoc. When in all reality were confined to a few drainages in each area that are realistically accessible. Also goats in the Landowner Mountain area at trout creek seem to have no fear of snowmobiles and are not the cause of them moving away from the Dalton area as previous environmental groups have stated. . When you've been writing letters for over 10 years on the same subject it feels like you're a broken record. But I want to reiterate the snowmobilers who utilize the Great Burn hold in high regard it's Alpine scenery and and incredible world-class riding. Most areas around Missoula in the Lolo National Forest someone can only ride so far and run into Wilderness boundaries that limit the days ride to a few short hours whereas the hoodoo area one can ride for a long day and still not have even seen a small portion of it.... this is why I am focusing my letter on a slight alternative to the no action option. Before the closure riding into Kelly Lake by way of the Schley Mountain Corridor was one of my favorite rides to do. All the way out to Leo and Smokey lakes. That is some beautiful country up there that only snowmobilers have access to in the winter. I also loved riding in the Williams lake to Goat Lake Area. Those are world-class mountains that cannot be viewed from any Highway thus they are not as well known... using a snowmobile to access the Tom Beal area for Backcountry skiing is also a highlight in my memories. I feel like the time is now to offer some alternative to never ending snowmobile closures. By forcing us all around the area of Lolo pass it further causes more conflicts with animals and other Recreationists. I have spent a lot of time around Beaver Ridge and Beaver Lake over the years and that is another great riding area that offers unique scenery and Alpine experience. April rides out to Goose and Steep lakes also rate high in my memory of pre-closure days. I would love to be able to take some of my family members back there someday, and show them what wild Scenic Idaho is all about. The other huge reason that we covet the area known as the Great Burn or Hoodoo area, is because at 7000 feet it holds more snow than areas elsewhere around Missoula that are up to 9,000 feet. That snow belt makes it ideal opportunity for Alpine riding with not a lot of stumps and obstacles to hit. Please consider allowing snowmobilers to use their historic Terrain that used to be available in the Clearwater National Forest and for future Generations of enjoyment.

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