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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am commenting on the revised management plan for the L&C National Forest. I live in Lewistown and have enjoyed access into the Big Snowies for close to 40 years. I have seen its use patterns changes considerably over that time from very little use to an almost constant stream of outdoor enthusiasts. These include a greater number of hunters, hikers, snowmobilers and mountain bikers. Horse traffic seems to remain much the same.

I have attended most of the discussion meetings put on by the Forest Service as they moved forward with formulating this plan. I have heard the outcry from motorized parties who don't feel they are allowed sufficient access and those outdoor fans calling for solitude and adherence to the regulations stipulated by management procedure when applied to a WSA. I have witnessed a huge increase in the use of mountain bikes up and around the Crystal Lake loop and when asking the bikers whether they would adhere to a prohibition to the bike's use have been told several times no they would not.

It's very hard for the FS to regulate and then not have the manpower to enforce. So, I propose an alternative solution. Put in a new loop trail using the Dry Pole drainage bringing it up to connect with old forest service trail 483 and 490 and bringing it down to the north end of the lake near the mouth. I see a problem in that there is a triangle of private land near the parking lot at the base of Crystal Lake road, I believe it belongs to the Butcher family. During the winter it is a popular snowmobile trail and so this would dovetail nicely with mountain bike use in the summer.

I remain adamant against dirt bike, atv, ohv and side by side anywhere in the Snowies except on the established southern boundary, #460 I believe.

We will soon have to deal with e-bikes and these must be considered as well. By retaining the loop trail to the ice caves and back to the lake as prescribed in the original WSA, you will define but without an alternative for the modern usages will be unable to offer a solution acceptable to all, or at least most. I suggest collaborating with the mountain bikers, snowmobilers and others to build a second loop trail that takes off and returns to Crystal lake .

Sincerely,

Clint