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Organization:

Title:

Comments: [External Email]Designation of non motorized area at Deception Creek

[External Email]

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Hello all,

I am writing to support the motorized closure at the cross country ski trails at Deception Creek and the Falls Campground on Togwotee Pass near Dubois. My understanding is that there is some terrain on the other side of the highway that may be eligible for the same classification.

I am not a cross country skier. I am a member of DART (Dubois Association for Recreation and Trails) for whom I volunteer grooming the X-Country Ski Trails. I enjoy snowmobiling and backcountry skiing and I very much enjoy grooming the trails for DART.

At DART we are dedicated to providing the community with recreational options. It has been difficult to do so at our ski area.

We live in an area with so much potential for recreation and it feels like we haven't even begun to look at the possibilities. Those possibilities are significantly stifled by lack of funding. Last year I submitted a grant proposal to the Wyoming RTP Grant Program and was unsuccessful because we cannot get a 5 year permit for our trails. Our permit is a temporary permit issued each year by the Forest Service and RTP requires a 5 year permit before we can be considered for funding. It is my understanding that the Forest Service cannot provide us a permit for 5 years unless the area is designated as non-motorized use. RTP, as you know, provides funding for the majority (if not all) of the snowmobile grooming which I also volunteer for. There is so much beautiful snowmobile terrain to be enjoyed and so little (or none) supported non motorized sport area by comparison. Of course, much less is needed for non motorized sports. A few thousand acres would mean so much.

We have been very lucky to have enjoyed a cooperative experience with all outdoor enthusiasts.

So far the use of our non motorized area has been primarily used for skiing, snowshoeing and snowbiking by the good grace of snowmobilers who find other places to ride. On a few occasions I have seen snowmobilers on the ski trail while I am grooming. In every case I have told them that we groom the trails for skiing and other non motorized sports. Each and every time those snowmobilers have been gentlemen and ladies and have even apologized while they adjusted their route in another direction. We realize they are not required to do this but we have been very appreciative of that. Part of our problem in this case is again, funding. We are only volunteers who receive no compensation and have a very small amount of money to work with for fuel and other expenses. Proper signage would be a huge improvement.

We have a loyal and appreciative group of people from Dubois who use the trail weekly and even daily. We also have some tourists and many participants from surrounding towns. I've even been told that we are a "best kept

secret" by some skiers who come from more crowded areas. I can't express in words how gratifying it is for me to have them show their appreciation and I hope we can do more for them in the future. We are hoping to do some clearing next year in some areas that have been used over the years for skiing and snowshoeing. We truly want to expand our options even if they are all within a set boundary. We would like nothing more than to cooperate with other sports and sincerely hope that others feel the same way.

Mike Tornosello