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Comments: [External Email]Shoshone NF Travel Management Planning Project

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Comments on Travel Plan:

These comments are being made by a person who is 71 years old and still enjoys the opportunity to recreate in the National Forests but lacks the physical ability to hike the region now. The ATV trails offer me the best alternative to a life style that appears to be disappearing with each new withdrawal/restriction of forest service lands.

1. I realize that the travel plan is a prescribed necessity for the Forest Service. It is unfortunate in this day and age that it is so long and complicated as to be easily readable. I would encourage that in the future a simple three or four page summary of actions be included with the simplest facts noted.

2. I did attend the online presentation for the Clark Fork and North Fork recommendations. The representative from the State of Wyoming made some excellent suggestions as to the lack of recognition of certain points in your plan. Especially interesting was that the plan did not address access concerns such as parking areas for ATV users to unload or use. Also the fact that certain trail closures on the map may show only a mile or a half mile of closure but the effects of such closures impacted other access/ATV routes making in one case the closure effecting three additional miles of trail.

3. In the Line Creek area I have concerns as to the closures of three routes there as noted as route 140 (NZ-01) both to the west and south of the forest service boundary and route 123.2C (NZ-51). Route 140 is indeed worthy of closure. I would prefer it stay open but the fact that private land prevents continuation of the road is a given. The closure of 123.2C really serves no purpose. At this moment I am unaware if the culvert across Line Creek washed out in the past year has been repaired. In essence non-repair already has closed partially the access that 123.2C serves.

4. I was not able to read the entire Environmental study due to its length. However I wanted to question what the effect would be on access for firefighting capabilities and only found a short note on page 34 concerning fire management. Millions of dollars are being spent every year to combat the huge increase in wildfires. Having fought the fires of 1988 in Cooke City and during my 33 year career as a Fire Chief and Fire Inspector within and for the State of Montana I was unable to see this important challenge addressed in the plan. Administrative trail closures to the public may help in some instances for emergency use. The ability of search and rescue operations could be hindered by the closure of access trails/points.

5. Besides the concerns listed I would feel fine about the implementation of Alternative 4 on all areas of the Shoshone National Forest with the belief that the actual number of miles of ATV trails subject to closure is misrepresented. While the status quo cannot be maintained due to input from major well funded players, at least Alternative 4 offers some hope of continued access.

6. I am very sadden to report that numerous calls and one email sent to the Shoshone National Forest in the week prior to November 18 were either never answered, no return call was made or the main office never answered the phone at all. This is unacceptable for an agency that is demanding comments be submitted by a certain time. If you want public comment, you need to make an effort to respond to that public.

7. Two of my questions that would have been posed had the Shoshone NF answered calls/email was the date when new plan would take effect and on what time schedule new ATV maps would be published. I believe that an update or notice as to those actions on your website would be very appropriate.

I am not a representative of any group or motorized organization. I'm a senior citizen who wants the chance to enjoy the outdoors through one of the only means that he can physically do so at his age and ability. The National Forest in my opinion should be managed with the concept of multiple use, that use being tailored to all American including senior citizens, youth and those with disabilities. Closing roads and access, shutting down campgrounds and forfeiting recreational opportunities at the whim of certain rich environmental groups does not serve the vast general public well. The comments expressed here are my own.

Keith Kolstad

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