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Comments: [External Email]comments on Shoshone National Forest travel plan

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I am the author of The Grizzly Bear; Nature First: Keeping Our Wild Places and Wild Creatures Wild; The Return of the Wolf to Yellowstone; and The Killing of Wolf Number Ten. I am also a former chair of the board of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition.

I have the following comments on the proposed Shoshone National Forest Travel Plan:

* There remains quite a lot of roadless area on the National Forest, and most of it should remain not only roadless but off limits to all forms of motorized travel. It is well known that motor vehicles of all kinds displace wildlife and are particularly deleterious in grizzly bear habitat. Less well known is the fact that non-motorized mountain bikes can also be source of disturbance and displacement. Their use should be restricted to the front country and non-sensitive wildlife habitat.

* The National Forest should place particular emphasis on prevention of informal trails created by forest visitors. Such trails frequently result in soil erosion and therefore sedimentation of waterways.

* There should be no new roads whatever. The effects of roads on wildlife, especially such sensitive species as grizzly bears and wolverines, are well known, and I need not repeat them here.

* The Forest should study and then follow through with removal and restoration of existing roads wherever possible, for the same reasons.

* Timber harvest practices, oil and gas activities, and all extractive uses associated with roads should be studied independently for their effects on existing roads, and should be modified, restricted, or eliminated in order to minimize deleterious effects on streams, soils, vegetation, and wildlife.

* Fire policy should be revised as necessary to minimize overuse of roads and damage to the Forest's ecological integrity due to the inevitable use of roads in fire management.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I have great faith in the National Forest Service's ability to envision a sustainable future in the face of climate change and increasing pressure from outside National Forest boundaries.

Thomas McNamee

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