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Comments: For 35 years, I and my family have been skiing, hiking, bike-riding, backpacking, rock-climbing in the GMUG - especially Grand Mesa. During that time, before climate change, biodiversity loss, and drought, through the broad swing from resource exploitation to conservation, recreation has been a steady economic driver and low-impact use. Valueing, promoting, and assisting recreational use of the GMUG can really save the forest. Recreation provides jobs; recreational users are willing to pay to support fire management, water conservation, and species conservation/reintroduction. I can't think of another use that has the same level of impact on the local economy. Having just hit retirement age, there's nothing I love more than getting out on the GMNC trails with the grandkids.

Not that I'm biased, but nordic skiing beats any motorized use in this regard. You can see the footprints of the animals crossing the groomed nordic track 20 km from the trailhead - and when the snow is gone, the trails are gone. In the winter, the GMUG can be inhospitable - non-motorized travel doesn't lead to corrosive impacts. You have to use your legs to get back out. The USFS should designate the GMNC trail system areas as a special management area for cross-country skiing and should be managed for non-motorized recreation.

The entire Skyway, County Line, and Ward systems should be classified as "Oversnow Vehicles Prohibited Seasonally." The Ward ski area needs to remain non-motorized for winter use - there is simply no reason for the Alternative C mischaracterization for the eastern part of the Ward Ski Area as motorized use.

Alternative D is the preferred option for winter travel. The Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Alternative D definitely is the preferred option for winter travel. Given the massive increase in use by the local communities bordering the GMUG, it is obvious that this designation, which allows the potential to expand non-motorized use of the area in the future, is preferable.

Until you have spent a lot of time on the Grand Mesa, it is hard to appreciate how important these non-motorized use classifications are - to the critters living there, and to the quiet, non-impactful, Mesa County skiers who buoy our economy with the money that keeps the lights on in many a home.

Thanks for your consideration.