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

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I am sending these as my comments on the Shoshone NF Travel Plan.

I'm a resident of Utah and a frequent visitor to the Shoshone NF. I love to rock climb, fish, and hike in this area of Wyoming. I understand the forest is undergoing a new management plan. I would like this plan to keep as much area free from motorized vehicles as possible. I have seen motorized vehicle use skyrocket here in Utah and really change the character of recreation here. I would hate to see that happen in Shoshone NF too.

Ever-evolving technological advances are increasing the range and ability to traverse more difficult terrain by any vehicle or machine, including mountain bikes. The Travel Management Plan should emphasize limits on all human mechanical access in any areas with important ecological, wildlife, and other values.

Even though each new motorized use in and of itself may seem insignificant, it is death by a thousand cuts. The cumulative impact is greater. In particular, as new technology creates the ability to travel further, there is a tendency to expand trail use.

I believe the Shoshone NF should restrict access to all roadless lands on the forest. These lands are critical to the "whole" and the whole is the ecological integrity of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. We know from numerous studies that roadless areas provide the best habitat for fisheries and wildlife.

A social issue that the FS must consider is the tendency of people utilizing mechanical access to create new "user" trails and routes. Indeed, a study in Colorado found that motorized users regularly went into closed areas. One other area to consider is how mechanical access impacts non-mechanical recreationalists. In general, mountain bikes, ORVs, snowmobiles, and dirt bikes have a greater negative impact on hikers, xc skiers, and horse users than hikes, xc skiers and horse users have on mechanical users. To the degree possible the FS should strive to separate these uses. That includes use by mountain bikes on hiker/horse trails.

Specific areas that the FS should consider in the Travel Plan should be permanent protection and closure to all mechanical use in the Clark Fork Wild and Scenic Corridor, Wyoming High Lakes Wilderness Study Roadless Area, Durior, Line Creek Plateau roadless area. The Union Pass area deserves special attention as ORV roads are proliferation in that area. No expansion of road or trail access should be permitted, and the decommissioning of roads should be the focus of the Travel Plan.

The Shoshone National Forest should be managing for wildlife habitat, intact and expansive wildlands, human-powered recreation, and functioning ecosystems. All other uses, including recreational use, should be subservient to preserving these primary functions.

Thank you for your review.

Skylar Elliott Casey

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