

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/8/2022 4:32:24 PM

First name: Forrest

Last name: Kamminga

Organization: Wyoming State Trails Program

Title: Program Manager

Comments: March 7, 2022

Jackson Area Trailheads and Trails Projects
Bridger-Teton National Forest - Jackson Ranger District
P.O. Box 1689
Jackson, WY 83001

RE:Jackson Area Trailheads and Trails Project

Project Planning Staff:

The Wyoming State Trails Program (WSTP) administers the Wyoming Off-Road Recreational Vehicle (ORV) Program and the Wyoming Snowmobile Trails Program and is committed to providing responsible management of motorized recreation and the enhancement of ORV/OHV/OSV riding opportunities through our grant funding and on-the-ground partnerships. Consequently, our comments are related to only those components of the Project which are associated with motorized recreation:

Project #3 - Granite Creek Winter Trailhead Re-design

We are disappointed with this proposal since it focuses primarily on only providing new signing versus substantive re-design and parking expansion to address what's been a long-term winter parking shortage at this trailhead. The statement in the scoping document that "the capacity of the trailhead parking area would not be expanded since doing so would just aggravate the limited parking at the destination (Granite Hot Springs)" misstates/misses who all the existing users at this winter parking area really are.

This area serves not only commercial as well as private party visitors whose destination is, in fact, the Granite Hot Springs pool, but also is the parking area for folks associated with cabins located across Granite Creek as well as an access point for backcountry snowmobilers who recreate in legally open riding areas south and east of Granite Creek. We've done a considerable amount of monitoring at this location for many years and have also noticed that contractors working on private cabins and the Safari Club in the Granite Creek area typically use 25% or more of available parking every winter. Parking demands from all of these various users has resulted in inadequate parking in this area for several decades, so this proposed project must properly consider all users versus catering only to those making trips to the pool area.

The site concept shown on Map 2 shows: (1) a proposed Turn-Around, which is greatly needed at this parking area and which we support; (2) Head-In Parking on the east side of the road (presumably for commercial outfitter vans and perhaps trucks with sled-decks) which appears to be an adequate size to meet current use; and (3) what appears to be a very limited, inadequate amount of Parallel Parking on the west side of the entrance road for truck/trailer parking.

Unfortunately, part 3 of the proposed site concept misses the mark as to what is needed at Granite Creek. It is our position that additional parking for private party truck/trailer combinations is highly warranted since the majority of snowmobilers continue to use trailers versus sled-decks. Consequently, we believe the proposed parking area should be much wider and longer than what is currently shown in Map 2.

In the past, we've also had discussions with the Jackson District regarding the potential construction of a groomer storage shed, to provide better equipment security and maintenance, either up on the bench near the entrance to the trailhead or otherwise in the immediate trailhead vicinity. We continue to have that interest, so would request opportunity to have further discussions about this prior to this project moving forward.

Project #4 - Mosquito Creek Winter Trailhead Restoration

We are also disappointed with this proposal since it misses the mark as to what's needed to provide adequate, properly designed winter parking in this area, as well as the ability to provide proper snow removal on the access road into this area. This proposal is also inconsistent with on-the-ground discussions we've had with District staff at this site since WSTP has been funding snow removal on the access road and current primitive parking area. Our specific concerns include:

1) Access Road Snow Removal: the access road needs to be widened by this project in order to provide room for snow storage resulting from road plowing to reach the trailhead.

2) Lack of a Turn-Around: Jackson District staff along with the snowmobile community has expressed interest in having grooming occur on short sections of snowmobile trail leading out of this trailhead. Without a turn-around being constructed at this trailhead that could accommodate a long truck/trailer unit, it will be impossible to safely transport, maneuver and unload a groomer in this area - which would be a shared unit transported from Granite Creek or the Gros Ventre area. Consequently, without a proper turn-around, grooming will not be able to be considered for this location.

3) No Trailers: the scoping notice states that this area would continue to be posted as "no trailers." We totally disagree with this position since it is discriminatory, ultimately catering to only a small percentage of the snowmobiling public. As stated above in our Granite Creek comments, the vast majority of snowmobilers continue to use trailers versus owning a sled-deck, so this project must accommodate the general snowmobiling public versus catering to only a small group of snowmobile riders. Consequently, if we're to be involved with future operation of this trailhead - whether it be funding snow removal, trail grooming and/or site improvements - we feel very strongly that improvements should allow space for parking truck/trailer combinations.

4) Inadequate Size: Overall, the proposed size of this trailhead is far too small: (1) it does not provide adequate space for snow storage resulting from snow plowing at the parking lot or along the entrance road, (2) it does not provide sufficient room for the required turn-around mentioned above, and (3) it does not provide for any trailer parking.

Unfortunately, this proposed project does little more than apply a band-aid to the existing condition by just adding signing and a modest amount of aggregate surfacing. If this is the only action open to consideration for long-term management of this Forest access area, we'll have to reconsider further financial partnership agreements related to snow removal, trail grooming, and maintenance at this location.

Project #5 - Mosquito Creek route construction

We support this proposed project and agree that it will help improve public safety, access and traffic flow in this vicinity.

Project #6 - Mosquito Creek route closure

We agree with the closure of these two user-created routes to prevent resource damage.

Thank you for advancing these projects and for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact me at 307-335-2671 or by e-mail at forrest.kamminga@wyo.gov if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted by,

Forrest Kamminga
Trails Program Manager
P.O. Box 1429
Lander, WY 82520