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Title:

Comments: I am commenting to express my support of ending the snowmobile season on April 30th. In the decade plus I have spent skiing Beartooth Pass, I have witnessed a lot of change. As with any of our popular backcountry ski destinations in the region, pressure from skiers has increased exponentially. This is an expected byproduct of the growth of the sport. and a testament to the quality of the unique ski experience offered on Beartooth Pass. What has been more perplexing has been the growth of the motorized user group. I am not categorically anti-snowmobile. In addition to backcountry skiing, I am also a snowmobiler. I have enjoyed snowmobiling recreationally, both as a means to itself and to access backcountry ski routes, in the High Lakes region during the traditional winter season. I appreciate the ability to get so deep into the high country and access the unique terrain the area offers via snowmobile, and support continued access to what is already allowed in this region, during the traditional season (ending April 30th). Despite this, I believe snowmobile use detracts significantly from the Beartooth Pass ski experience. To me, the ski experience on Beartooth Pass is defined by quick access to amazing ski slopes near the highway. The area seems to support the number of skiers well. Snowmobile use in these same areas has many downsides. - The impact of a 500 lb machine ripping through recently thawed tundra over and over again is obvious to anyone looking, and is enormously larger than the impact caused by skiers on foot. Skiers can more easily adapt their travel to stick to the snow and disperse impact where they cannot. - Snowmobiles ripping around traditional ski slopes introduce a hazardous and undesirable element to the ski experience, where downhill skiers not only have to focus on their lines of descent but be aware of snowmobiles coming from above, below, and across slopes at high rates of speed. In the partylike atmosphere of many of the popular ski zones, normal backcountry travel practices such as exposing only one skier at a time on a slope are often disregarded. I have both witnessed and had to make split-second adjustments to my ski descents due to snowmobilers interfering with my descent plan, particularly in the Garnder Headwall area. - Large truck-trailer rigs take up much more space than necessary in the already limited parking, forcing suboptimal and dangerous parking on an already narrow roadway. After listening to friends operating Beartooth Basin discuss the heavy regulation of parking at their ski area, and the efforts taken to mitigate impact from 'out of bounds' parking there, it is sadly laughable to see the lack of regulation of snowmobilers parking in illegitimate spots (often on tundra) and digging ruts into the tundra to get to the snow. I would hope this double standard is considered in travel planning efforts. To sum it up, my springtime ski experience on Beartooth Pass is negatively impacted by motorized use up there. I not only speak for myself but many local friends who may or may not also submit comments on this point. I believe the user experience and environmental concerns on the Pass would be enhanced by disallowing snowmobile use after April 30th. Thanks for consideration!