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Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a southwest Montanan, I frequently access the wild and scenic lands of the Shoshone National Forest. They are part of the continuous ecosystem that stretches out my front door. The forest provides important habitat for wildlife and is a place where I frequently find renewed connection to the natural world. These lands are important to me, and therefore I'm submitting comments as you finalize your Travel Management Plan. First and foremost, I cherish the spring backcountry skiing opportunities off Beartooth and Togwotee passes. The Shoshone NF has incredibly accessible, world class skiing. I try to ski on the Forest every year. However, the conflict between motorized and human powered recreationists has been affecting my use of the areas. Having snowmobiles race past, highmark around and generally compete for the same areas has made me less likely to visit these areas or, when I do, has displaced me from the more popular and accessible zones. Besides the noise and exhaust, it is a safety concern. Some of these conflicts could be minimized through seasonal OSV use closures beginning April 30 (rather than June 15 as the EA suggests). An earlier seasonal closure would also protect sensitive vegetation and benefit wildlife, like bighorn sheep, grizzly bears and wolverines, in the area. Research has shown that a high density of motorized routes negatively affects wildlife. Therefore, to protect imperiled species, I would like to see no net increase to the wheeled motorized footprint. The Forest needs to address illegal routes, include robust enforcement mechanisms, and secure sustainable funding to maintain its current road and trail system. With these enforcement concerns, I oppose any permanent motorized use in Inventoried Roadless Areas, the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone Wild and Scenic River Corridor, and the Line Creek Plateau Research Natural Area. New routes will only exacerbate this issue. To follow the Wyoming Wilderness Act of 1984, I'm requesting that the Forest limit OSV use within the High Lakes Wilderness Study Area to only designated trails shown in Alternative 4. When the Act was written, the snowmachines weren't nearly as capable of wide off trail travel and the modern snowmachines reach remote places in the Study Area causing more stress to wildlife and impairing the wilderness characteristics of the area. Your designation of the historic ski trail on Sublette Pass as an ungroomed snowmobile trail would not minimize conflict between user groups but would instead further encourage it. In that vein, please keep it nonmotorized only. Also, an official motorized closure for cross-country skiing in the Falls/Deception and Pinnacles areas on the Wind River Ranger District (with continued grooming), would give more opportunity for human-powered, quiet recreation. These opportunities are important to me and a big reason I visit the Shoshone National Forest. Furthermore, the Forest's environmental analysis appeared to be the minimum necessary and didn't approach decisions with a site-specific process. The 30-day comment period appeared to disregard the importance of meaningful public comment, the complexity and consequence of travel planning, roads, and recreation on the forest, and the Shoshone's unique role in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and our National Forest system generally. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments during this process. These lands are incredible and continue to be important to me.