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First name: Olivia

Last name: Drake

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Re: Kaniksu OSV Travel Plan #53091

To Whom it May Concern,

Please consider the following comments regarding the proposed Kaniksu Over Snow Vehicle travel plan.

I am a third-generation Boundary County resident who appreciates all that the forest provides, including scenic beauty, recreation, and crucial wildlife habitat, along with commercial forest products which have historically supported our local economy. I have participated as a member of the NIWG which helped to provide a preliminary recommendation for the travel map. I would like to thank all of those that facilitated and participated in the working group.

I generally support the proposed winter travel plan which creates a balance between habitat requirements, non-motorized and motorized recreation opportunities.

I support the recommendations and comments made regarding the proposed action by the NIWG, and hope that these will be implemented into the final plan.

In particular, changing the Caribou & French Creek land blocks to open yearlong, creating buffers along some open trails/routes, adding existing groomed routes, and adjusting/adding to the conditionally yearlong open areas at RomanNose and Moose Lake.

Outdoor recreation can provide tremendous health and economic benefits for both individuals and communities. As the population of Boundary County continues to increase, it is important to plan for and provide access to local recreational opportunities while maintaining forest health and habitat sustainability. Public opinion will play a great role in the ability to maintain habitat and enforce necessary closures. The less that people are directly effected by widespread closures, the more that they will be open to supporting conservation efforts.

Since the travel plan will be in place for a long period, I strongly recommend that no additional year-long closures be added to the final plan. While this plan opens more areas to motorized recreation than are currently, it also represents a historical increase in closure areas when compared to the pre-injunction levels. Any additional closures will concentrate increased pressure on other areas remaining open.

While I support the NIWG recommendations, I don't feel that the NIWG was given ample time to fully consider the scope of the proposed seasonal closures. Please consider the following in your analysis:

- * Closing OSV on April 1st eliminates between 20% and 40% of the available riding season. The effect will be to both recreation and the local economy.

- * Peer enforcement (pressure from local snowmobile clubs and individuals to abide by closures) will be extremely important to ensure users abide by the travel plan. The ability to provide peer enforcement will be dramatically damaged by widespread closures such as the April 1 shown on the proposed travel plan. I have observed that people are less likely to poach closed areas when there are ample areas open to riding/recreation.

- * The Grizzly is currently recovering without April 1 closures. Most species have the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. These closures should only be considered in the most critical habitats and/or areas where current denning & activity is known.

Some general thoughts to include in your review:

Noise buffering: other solutions such as exhaust silencers could be considered instead of widespread closures.

Designated Routes: There should be capability to change some routes from open/ungroomed to groomed without major changes to the overall plan.

Future information: There should remain some flexibility in the plan for future developments, such as the ability to open larger areas open year-round when the BMUs are meeting goals.

Current snow depths could be considered instead of permanent closures to protect plant species.

Thank you for your considerations,
Olivia Drake