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First name: Peter

Last name: Ward

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I Support OSV Access for the Kaniksu OSV Travel Management Plan

Dear Mr. Petrick:

I am writing to share feedback regarding the Kaniksu OSV Travel Management Plan. I enjoy recreating on public land and want to express my support for keeping access open in the Panhandle Forest for all types of recreation uses, including OSV use. I believe through proper management and education trails roads and areas can remain open without negative impacts. Proper access will help mitigate damage by preventing concentration of use and impacts.

Wildlife is an area of concern within the management plan. Many species were identified and measures were proposed to ensure protection for these animals. The USFS needs to use best available science in setting boundaries and making decisions. Currently bear populations are being managed appropriately therefore the need to designate more wildlife habitat or enact more restrictions in the name of preservation is inconsistent and unnecessary. All other considerations for wildlife and big game should be using other data to make decisions. Yellowstone National Park showed that motorized winter recreation had no significant impact on big game.

These forests include wilderness areas and other restrictive designations already. In other words, there is already very restrictive management in the areas bordering the forest and Forest Service lands should be managed for the greatest good for the greatest number of people. I completely oppose all the proposed wilderness areas within this EA. Restricting OSV use to specific dates is arbitrary and capricious. All alternatives propose reductions in access through areas, grooming and dates of use. Therefore, none of the alternatives are acceptable.

The USFS should finally begin to reverse its decades-long systematic discrimination against those with mobility impairment-related disabilities. Travel management policies focused on "minimizing" the environmental impacts of motorized recreation have resulted in a dramatic increase of lands that are closed to those who can only access public lands with motorized assistance. OSV access allows those with mobility impairment disabilities to enjoy winter recreation on USFS lands.

I am opposed to the USFS closing any areas to OSV use for alleged user conflict. USFS shouldn't be basing its decisions off of the subjective preferences of users who want to restrict the use of others. Motorized recreation user experience needs to be as high of a priority as non-motorized user experience. All users can be accommodated. Those who want to experience solitude and remoteness in their recreation have abundant wilderness areas nearby to explore where motorized recreation is prohibited, and the USFS doesn't need to restrict multiple-use areas based on manufactured concerns of conflict.

In conclusion, I believe in shared use and that there is enough public land for all to enjoy as long as agencies use best practices. Please refrain from closures as roads and trails and areas open to recreation are critical to the forest. I support continuing with current management. I do support changes made in order to keep all current areas open, remove recommended wilderness and the USFS can ensure that long term access will not be restricted due to timber harvest and vegetation treatments.