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Comments: I strongly disagree with the proposed action.

I have been snowmobiling in the areas for over 25 years have witnessed zero impacts or conflicts by snowmobiles after March 31 or anytime of the year. The proposed OSV maps that the FS has presented restrict access to almost all the upper elevation areas for snowmobiling after March 31. The lower elevation areas were left open but these areas are not rideable after March 31. The neighboring Kaniksu Forest, in Idaho, is now passing identical restrictions. This is not acceptable.

For example, the Keeler Area south of Troy. The upper elevation areas are shown to be restricted after March 31 on the Kootenai proposed OSV maps. The Kaniksu OSV plan is now blocking all of the riding west of the Rattle Mountain saddle. So effectively, between the two Forests' OSV plans, all snowmobiling after March 31 will be blocked. The lower elevations are not rideable at that time of year. This is not acceptable. This is one of the main snowmobiling areas in the spring; and the high elevation areas north, south, east, and west of the Rattle Mountain saddle need to remain open after March 31.

The Forest Service has failed to thoroughly analyze direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of snowmobiling/snowmobiles. The basis for restricting snowmobiling after March 31 is flawed. This EA needs to be retracted until proper data collection and study can be completed. Specialist reports cannot be relied upon until thorough field data collection is utilized and incorporated.

There are no impacts to wildlife by OSV travel in these areas. Recent population studies by the University of Washington and USGS in the CYE show that the grizzly bear population is likely much higher than the current numbers being used as the basis for grizzly bear management. Based upon that, the grizzly bear is recovered and thriving in the area. The grizzly bear should no longer be used to restrict access and drive management practices on the Kootenai Forest or any adjacent forest for that matter. It is supposed to be a "multi-use forest".

The Forest is taking away jobs from the local economies by limiting and restricting OSV access. These are jobs created by out of state riders being in the area during the spring. Also, the local snowmobile dealerships will suffer due to reduction in business. At a time when unemployment rates are at its highest percentages in Northern Idaho and Northwest Montana, this is last thing we need. Private sector jobs are much needed for a healthy economy. Mining and logging jobs are at an all-time low.

This is a much too drastic of a restriction. Going from zero restriction after March 31 to 99% of high elevation riding areas being closed. There has to be other ways to manage forest land concerns other than blocking off the public. Lets figure out a different way such as community outreach and education. Lets collect thorough and proper data and come up with a different plan.

Thanks for considering my comments.

Denver Winslow

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