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First name: Kyle

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Greetings

My name is Kyle West. I have been an avid snowmobiler and outdoorsman of the Kootenai National Forest my entire life just as my father and grandfathers before me.

I own and operate a local Motorsports repair Business in the Eureka area where I service many over the snow machines, including the ones that the KNF employees operate. I believe with the tightening restrictions proposed within the KNF that a huge negative economic impact will devastate the community in many ways and do not support any restrictions whatsoever and these comments will reflect not only that but the facts to the best of my knowledge and information given to me by the hardworking folks over at the USFS.

First and foremost, I would like to comment on the absolute lackluster display that was the public meeting on July the 26th, 2023.

Here are a few key points as to why I thought the USFS had failed the community in that meeting.

-Public engagement was almost zero with there being at most 20-30 in attendance, I believe the outreach by the USFS to inform the community was poor as (1) The meeting took place during the middle of a work day where most people that are passionate about the issue are unavailable to present themselves. (2) The information about the meeting and USFS affairs are reported primarily within the Missoulian News Paper which is not highly distributed within the effected population.

-The "Presentation" was more of a Q&A where there was some maps of what the USFS plan of action are with no status quo map of what we currently have to compare them to.

-The lack of coordination between presenters and getting different answers for important topics between them.

This concludes my comment about the presentation.

As for the actual Travel management plan scoping, here are my thoughts and comments about that.

- The lawsuit between MWA and USFS stated that a travel management plan for winter and summer needed to be finalized. This statement absolutely does not mean there is a requirement for restrictive management on our forest.

- Site specific 5a management has been done within areas of our forest (Williams Creek/Whitefish divide) and to the best of my knowledge site specific travel management outside of a travel plan is not permitted

- Congress created the Ten Lakes WSA in 1977, allowing continued use of over the snow motorized use to occur as it did prior to the act. This travel management plan proposes closure of many areas of the Ten Lakes WSA to over the snow use. It is my belief from the facts that the USFS does not have the power to make management actions within the WSA without congressional approval. Page 46 of the 2015 KNF Land Management planning book states "The Ten Lakes recommended wilderness acres are as described in the 1985 Legislative Report to Congress. They overlap MA1c (WSA). MA1c management area direction takes precedent." Page 47 states under MA1c standards for access and recreation that "Over-snow vehicle use is not allowed except where it maintains the wilderness character as it existed at the time of designation (1977) "MA1c-STD-AR-01". This would mean to me that over the snow use within the Ten Lakes WSA is to remain and be managed as it was at time of WSA designation, that means every single place all year long within the WSA as they were at time of designation

Period.

- This plan stresses about restrictions due to Conflicts between denning species and OSV users, I would like to see factual science about that in the KNF. As a person who has operated OSV within the KNF for 27 years now I have yet to have conflict with said species, maybe that's just me and I'm lucky but I would be very interested to see data that suggests that there is an issue and speak with the person who has done the study.

- Where is the collaboration between USFS and local governments? The USFS are employed to serve the people of these lands and have proposed efforts that will have impact on many things including snowpack and watershed. Glen Lake Irrigation is a local government agency that provide a crucial service to the Eureka area and I would like to see a study done on how the watersheds of the KNF will be affected by not having snowpack density that would have been achieved from osv use.

- Last comment would be that the USFS has had years to compile information for this plan and I feel that 30 days is not near enough time to digest or make an accurate comment on the issues presented with this proposition.

Thank you for your time,
Sincerely Kyle West