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Title:

Comments: This OSV use travel plan for the Kootenai forest seems like a great start for winter travel management. I think it does a good job at addressing the concerns of minimizing the impacts on wildlife, natural resources and conflicts with other users, which is ultimately the goal of a plan like this. However, I do believe it acknowledges some additional concerns but does not discuss how they will be addressed. For example, the plan says it recognizes that the area has not been screened for noise and air pollution impacts. This is a significant result of OSV use and the impacts of air pollution on the wildlife and other users should be taken into account. Furthermore, given that there is no limit on the number of OSVs in the area, other than the parking lot size, the forest service should consider the effects of increased numbers of OSVs and the pollution and problems that may arise from that. In addition to the pollution, the plan should consider how noise affects the wildlife in the area and the experience of other users. For example, will cross country skiers be disturbed by the loud engines of OSVs? And will the noise wake up the hibernating grizzly bears? The plans account for grizzly bears coming out of hibernation, but do not recognize that the vehicle use could disrupt hibernation, harming the bears and putting the people in danger. Even though the designated trails theoretically keep users out of known grizzly locations, what keeps users on the trails? Will there be personnel to enforce the trail designations? There should be a plan in place to enforce the OSV use restrictions or educate users prior to entering the area. In addition, there should be clear markers on the trails to make it easy for users to follow the boundaries, but this should be balanced to not distract from the scenery. These are some concerns that I hope will be assessed and recognized when completing the OSV use plan.