Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/29/2023 5:29:01 AM
First name: Teagan
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: To whom it may concern,
I have never been to the Kootenai National Forest, but as an active environmentalist, I do care about winter recreation management, regardless of the location, and I feel it is important to share my concerns with the Over-snow Motorized Use Travel Plan. Personally, I enjoy partaking in activities such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.
The Kootenai National Forest Over-snow Motorized Use Travel Plan has a really great start in terms of how they plan to minimize the impacts on whitebark pine habitats as well as denning grizzly bears, but there are several other issues I hope to see addressed in future versions of this plan. To start, the Over-snow Motorized Use Travel Plan says that they plan to educate the public about the importance of whitebark pine and the potential threats to that habitat, but I wonder if just education is enough. Would it be possible to ensure that over-snow motorized vehicle trails don't go through this habitat at all? I am also curious if there is other flora that would be negatively impacted by the use of over-snow motorized vehicles. I would also like to see the impact of noise and air pollution addressed. I worry that there might be birds or other species that would be negatively impacted by this.
Looking at the map, I noticed that there are lots of recreation areas that are isolated out in the wilderness. How will people use over-snow motorized vehicles in these areas if they can't bring motorized vehicles into the wilderness? Does it actually make sense to have that area open to over-snow motorized vehicles if it isn't accessible? On the other hand, there are also several isolated areas of wilderness within recreation areas. I worry that without clear boundaries over-snow motorized vehicles will end up in wilderness areas. Please consider how to make recreation boundaries obvious while people are out in these areas. Could boundaries be in line with natural barriers such as rivers or roads?
Thank you so much for all the work that has already gone into this plan. I hope that these concerns are taken into consideration so that the forest can be enjoyed by all its inhabitants.