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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I previously submitted a comment on the draft plan, and believe I have standing to object to the Draft Final Plan.

I am a resident of Trout Creek, Montana, and am an experienced hiker and outdoorsman. I have hiked in the Great Burn area, including the area of the state line divide. I have been interested in public forest management issues all my life.

My objection concerns my opposition to the decision to open high elevation portions of the Hoodoo RA to OSV use. I do understand and support the idea that an objection is not considered relevant simply because my personal preference was not incorporated into the plan.

The reason for my objection is that the decision to promote motorized use of these high elevation roadless lands represents a policy that is remarkably out of step with the priorities of the American people, as clearly expressed in the ESA. It is also remarkably out of step with research on the needs of grizzly bears, wolverines, mountain goats and other wildlife, for high elevation habitat with minimal human disturbance.

Many people have commented on the notable fact that the day after the NPCF announced the final plan, which expands high elevation motorized access into previously protected areas, the USF&W Service announced the listing of wolverines as a threatened species.

The coincidence of these two announcements so close together, highlights the reality that the NP-C Forest Plan represents a recipe for a bitter ongoing conflict between the needs of wildlife and the expectations of OSV users. Since scientists expect snow dependent denning areas to decrease in size and number over time, there will surely be increasing needs over time, to protect declining habitat by restricting sources of disturbance.

Based on the experience of OSV travel planning in several national forests in Region 1, research based restrictions on OSV use have been bitterly resisted and not infrequently ignored by motorized groups.

Whatever anyone feels about motorized recreation on our public lands, it seems fair to say that the Hoodoo designations in the NPC Forest Plan are likely to:

1. Further degrade habitat for bears, wolverines and mountain goats

2. Set up years of conflict and resentment over motorized access policies as the climate changes

Can FS leadership really justify an approach to land designations, with such an obvious and predictable negative outcome?

In order to resolve my objection, I specifically request:

The entire 151,874 acres of the Hoodoo Roadless Area be designated as Recommended Wilderness.

That the plan include research based standards for management of mountain goat habitat.

That the FS avoid the creation of new motorized access areas, in any places with a history of illegal use, such as in this case. Illegal use should be punished, not rewarded.

Thank you for considering my objection.

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