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Comments: To whom it may concern,

First, I would like to thank the Lolo National Forest for the opportunity to comment on the new proposed forest management plan. I was born and raised in Montana and continue to call this great state my home. Unfortunately, our access to public lands are at risk. Seems as though our public lands are being locked up into RWA's (Recommended Wilderness Areas) and WSA's (Wilderness Study Areas) that have historically been open to multi use including motorized use. I am here to ask you all to take careful consideration when making decisions that limit Montanans from accessing our public lands. We all know how many special interest groups are out there with limitless funding trying to persuade rational folks like yourselves to make decisions that are not in the best interest of hard working Montana folks like myself. I am an avid outdoor recreationist. Both motorized and non. One of my passions in life is backcountry snowmobiling. I'm not talking about riding on a remote road in our forest somewhere. I'm talking about riding in our true backcountry far from any road or groomed trail. The Solitude and challenges, myself and many others like me enjoy in our backcountry, is what breathes life into us. It's no different than the backcountry hiker or the horseback rider that seeks the same solitude and challenges. The impact to the environment left by snowmobilers is far less than any other outdoor recreationists. After the snow melts so does any sign of a snowmobile ever being there. There is really zero conflict with other users and wildlife is seldom ever seen in the high country. With 8 to 15 feet of snow on average, the majority of our furry friends are at lower elevations where food is more abundant. I am a huge supporter of Wilderness and protecting land for future generations. I grew up on the Rocky Mountain Front and spent a lot of time in the Bob Marshall Wilderness growing up. This place will forever hold a special place in my heart. Montana boasts roughly 3.5 million acres of Wilderness. Do we need more wilderness that locks out the majority of people from accessing our public lands? No, we do not. The majority of the proposed and current RWA's don't fit the bill for wilderness designation and never will. But, they are managed as wilderness without congressional designation. This restricts the majority of the population from accessing these public lands that we all pay to have access to unless you walk in on your own 2 feet. There are numerous reasons to manage the Lolo Forest under a multi-use management plan and very few reasons to expand on RWA's.

The scope of my comments are geared towards protecting backcountry access via snowmobiles. I would like to see the Hoodoo and Surveyor areas of the Great Burn RWA reopened for over the snow use. I currently snowmobile in the Spruce creek drainage, Beaver ridge, Beaver Lake, Shoot Creek drainage, Spruce Lakes and Grimes Lake areas that will be closed to over the snow use with the proposed northerly expansion of the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. This would be devastating to the snowmobile community. These areas have been historically open to snowmobiles with no detrimental ecological impact. The maps included in the Proposed Action are sub par at best. I think many of us would like to see a much more detailed map to really accurately comment on these areas.

Thanks for taking the time to read my comments. I am confident you will make decisions that benefit all Montanans and keep backcountry snowmobiling areas open for future generations.