

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/1/2024 2:56:05 PM

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Comments: Comments on the Lolo National Forest Management Plan:

Cross country skiing on groomed trail systems is an increasingly popular recreational activity in Missoula that allows community members to recreate outside during the winter and enjoy the national forest. In particular, Pattee Canyon and Lolo pass are essential trail systems that promote Nordic skiing and youth development as witnessed by the numerous users and packed parking lots during the winter months. However, the marginal weather and conditions during the early and late seasons severely inhibits Nordic skiing opportunities in the greater Missoula area.

The Lolo National Forest Management Plan is a key component to improving the Nordic skiing opportunities in the greater Missoula area. Specifically, the following points would greatly improve winter recreating experience in the national forest:

- Expanded dynamic Nordic skiing trail systems at Pattee canyon would improve the experience. In particular, expanding the trail systems to higher elevations would allow grooming and recreating earlier in the winter season.
- Allowing for more youth winter programs and practices at the Pattee Canyon trails would greatly expand the number of winter recreators and supporters of trail systems. As the director of ZANY, Missoula Nordic ski clubs youth program, I have direct knowledge about how popular Pattee canyon is for families in and around Missoula. Kids come from down the bitterroot and out interstate 90, rt. 200 and 93 to participate in ZANY, not just Missoulians. Pattee is a small area and the program remains small to accommodate the area. The program fills up in under 10 minutes every year and numerous families are unable participate in an affordable and equitable program at Pattee canyon.
- Opportunities for competitive and noncompetitive events at Pattee Canyon and Lolo pass would improve user experience and growth.
- Exploring snow making opportunities would be an exciting prospect for winter recreating.
- The snow at Lolo pass is the most consistent in the area. We are thankful for the grooming that does occur at Lolo. However, Nordic skiing opportunities at Lolo pass are hindered by inconsistent grooming, competition with other motorized users, non-dynamic trails and minimal ski specific trails. Developing a Nordic skiing specific trail system on the highway 12 corridor on the Montana side could address many of these challenges.

Specific areas of the management plan are addressed below with comments. Thank you for your time and