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Comments: Cross country skiing on groomed trail systems is a popular winter activity in the greater-Missoula area and provides a way for community members of all ages to enjoy the national forest. Pattee Canyon and Lolo pass provide essential trail systems for cross-country/Nordic skiing and these trails are important for youth activities as well as for community access. These trails could better serve the community through improvements in access and expanded trail systems. These trail systems often have high use in the winter as is evident by full and over-full parking access. The Missoula-area often has marginal weather and conditions for skiing during early and late season, and there are opportunities to improve winter recreation experiences in locations such as Pattee Canyon and Lolo pass.

I support improving winter recreation experience in the national forest in the following ways:

- Expanding the Nordic skiing trail systems at Pattee canyon. 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. This would greatly expand the number of winter recreators and supporters of trail systems.
- Expanding the trail systems and grooming at Lolo pass. 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.
- Providing opportunities for competitive and noncompetitive events at Pattee Canyon and Lolo pass would improve user experience and growth.

Specific comments are included below. Thank you for your consideration.

Pattee

pg 120 3.2.8 02 -Desired Conditions - States that ... parking meets demand of use...

- The parking infrastructure at Pattee Canyon doesn't meet the high demand of nordic skiing in the area - parking is often crowded and cars line the road. This illustrates community interest in Nordic skiing and new trail development in the area as well as improved parking infrastructure

pg 121 Objectives 02 - Create at least 3 opportunities to enhance trail connectivity.

- Please consider increasing this number. I support increasing the number of connecting trails.

Lolo

pg 127 Desired Conditions 03 - Backcountry skiing along HWY 12 corridor

- The groomed Nordic skiing opportunities at Lolo pass need improvement (consistent grooming and further trail development), especially considering this is often the only early and late Nordic skiing options in the greater Missoula area. I support more access and additional groomed trails.

Concentrated Recreation Use - p. 160, 4.5 MA 5

Table 72

Lolo Pass - 469 Acres/miles for nordic skiing <-- The amount of groomed Nordic skiing trails in this area is significantly smaller.

Pattee Canyon --> Nordic skiing not mentioned as a featured activity despite the high demand.

Rattlesnake --> Nordic skiing is also not mentioned as a featured activity despite the unique opportunities here.

pg 160 Desired Conditions 01 - Concentrated public use areas provide opportunities to recreate that respond to increasing recreation demand.

- I am in support of this especially in regards to Nordic skiing at Pattee Canyon and Lolo Pass. The demand is evident in the parking challenges created by high use at these areas in the winter.

pg 161 Desired Conditions 06 - Provide opportunities for competitive and noncompetitive events.

- Strongly in support of this especially at Pattee Canyon where these opportunities are drastically missing. The close proximity to town would make these very popular activities, both for youth and community members of all ages.

pg 161 Objectives 04 - 10 years modify 1 system of trails for user groups (MTB, hiking, equestrian)

- I support adding Nordic skiing to the list of activities in this objective. It is a high demand winter activity. Please consider more than 1 trail modification. The plan is over 10 years and outdoor recreation is increasingly important to our community.