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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Flathead National Forest,

I oppose any blanket restrictions to any type of access to public lands.

I am writing to share feedback regarding the Flathead NF recommended wilderness and winter travel management plan. I enjoy recreating on public land and want to express my support for keeping access open in the Flathead Forest for all types of recreation uses, including OSV use. I believe through proper management and education trails roads and areas can remain open without negative impacts. Proper access will help mitigate damage by preventing concentration of use and impacts.

Wildlife is an area of concern within the management plan. Many species were identified and measures were proposed to ensure protection for these animals and their denning habitat. The USFS needs to use best available science in setting boundaries and making decisions. Yellowstone NP conducted a study on motorized winter use on wildlife and showed no significant impact. Areas should not be restricted due to potential denning habitat.

These forests include wilderness areas and other restrictive designations. In other words, there is already very restrictive management in the areas bordering the forest and Forest Service lands should be managed for the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Restricting OSV use to specific dates is arbitrary and capricious. The USFS should allow the date-restricted areas to be managed when motorized access standards are met. OSV use should be permitted on the entirety of the 12,848 acres that were identified as suitable for OSV use. The natural terrain will restrict use in areas that is unsafe. If the forest service is restricted motorized use on all areas identified as recommended wilderness they should allow OSV use on all lands suitable. I do not support restricting OSV use in the areas that have historically allowed it. The USFS should be maintaining the values, which includes recreational value. The 383 acres should continue to allow these uses.

Roads leading to recommended wilderness areas or Wilderness should not be closed or restricted. There should not be buffer zones created to these RWA's. This will help to comply with the Multiple Use Sustainable Yield Act. I do support authorized use within recommended wilderness. This will help prevent forest fires that are more detrimental to Wilderness than anything else. The Forest Service is required to analyze for recommended wilderness but they do not have to recommend and manage as such per the 2012 Planning Rule.

The USFS should finally begin to reverse its decades-long systematic discrimination against those with mobility impairment-related disabilities. Travel management policies focused on "minimizing" the environmental impacts of motorized recreation have resulted in a dramatic increase of lands that are closed to those who can only

access public lands with motorized assistance. OSV access allows those with mobility impairment disabilities to enjoy winter recreation on USFS lands.

I am opposed to any recommendation that snow depth and dates of use be used as a motorized access standard. Snow depth isn't a reliable standard and weather fluctuates year to year for motorized access. Managers should have discretion to allow OSV use if the use won't result in meaningful environmental impacts.

In conclusion, I believe in shared use and that there is enough public land for all to enjoy as long as agencies use best practices. Please refrain from closures as roads and trails are critical to the forest.