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Comments: I'd like to see the Forest Service designate areas of groomed cross country ski trails as non-motorized. Specifically I'd like protection of the traditionally groomed trails at Big Meadows, Rock Creek, and the upper Rio Grande (Creede area).

The use of snowmobiles on groomed track ruins the skiing surface and, the modern mountain sleds can cut deep trenches. These trenches are a real safety issue for skiers, and as a volunteer groomer I have spent considerable time shoveling to repair this destruction.

The amount of area the Nordic trails use is minuscule compared to the acreage available to snowmobilers and the Nordic skiing is certainly a valid and appropriate use of public lands. I believe the membership numbers of the three San Luis Valley area Nordic clubs show a user population exists that warrants Forest Service attention to this group.

The issue of dividing use areas specific to user groups has many precedents in Forest Service policies. There exist Wilderness areas, wildlife areas with special closures, and special conservation areas. Nordic trails specifically receive protections in other Forest Service districts, such as the trails in the Grand Mesa area. So there is precedence for this action in Rio Grande Forest. I've even seen a Rio Grande Forest map posted on Chama Pass with "ski only" areas designated, which indicates historical policy on this forest.

I greatly appreciate your attention to this issue.