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Comments: The access to outdoor recreation in the Rio Grande National Forest is fantastic. I grew up visiting my grandparents in Pagosa Springs, CO every summer and winter. This naturally includes scores of days at the Wolf Creek Ski Area. As I've grown as a skier, I've begun appreciating other forms of winter travel including nordic skiing and alpine touring. The most rewarding part of these practices is immersing oneself in a backcountry winter environment. The characteristics that most clearly define that for me is crisp clean air, wide open untouched snowfields, and no sounds but the wind in the pines and the crunch of snow underfoot. I won't ever say that OSV use should be banned, but the areas where it is allowed should not cause the loss of the best opportunities to find the things that make America's public lands the greatest asset of any country on the planet. Allowing OSV use closer to the Wolf Creek Ski Area, various backcountry huts, and ski trails like Big Meadows and Rock Creek would significantly diminish the ability to immerse oneself in a winter mountain environment in one of the best places left to do so.

I want to add one more thought here. As I've read about the current proposal, one thing that sticks out to me is how the minimum snow depth for OSV use in Colorado is based on the current requirement in California. This is a major red flag for me as a volunteer ski trip leader for the Colorado Mountain Club. I help support our avalanche education courses, and one of the things we say early and often is how dangerous the snow pack is in Colorado, especially compared to a maritime snowpack like the Sierra Nevada in California. More evaluation needs to be done to determine whether 12 inches is indeed sufficient with the much looser and dryer snow conditions that we have in the Rocky Mountains in order to protect our unique flora and fauna.