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Comments: As someone who enjoys winter activities in Colorado's beautiful mountains, I believe that these alpine environments are both an incredibly valuable resource for winter recreation, and a very fragile ecosystem that may not be able to survive the heavy impacts of OSVs. Protecting these areas from the noise and air pollution of OSVs is very important, because these not only ruin the backcountry experience for non-motorized users, but also can scare and impact the behavior of wildlife, including some threatened species such as lynx and others that inhabit the Rio Grande National Forest. Additionally, air pollution from OSVs is certainly unhealthy for trees surviving in the fragile alpine environment. Similarly, the 12 inch snowpack guideline will not be sufficient because it is unenforceable and unlikely that users will follow it, besides, even where there is sufficient snow, fragile tundra areas may be damaged as OSVs get from roads onto areas of deeper snowpack.

In review, these ecosystems are a fragile and valuable resource that need to be protected, and it would be devastating to both the environment and other non-motorized recreational users if OSVs had access to much of the Rio Grande National Forest.