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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Rio Grande Forest Over-Snow Vehicle Travel Management Plan. I comment as a cross country skier, and certainly support a balanced approach allowing all users (motorized and non-motorized) to share and respectfully enjoy the winter forest environment. My wife, Kathy and I are life-long avid skiers, generally partaking 2 or 3 times per week on groomed/tracked trails, with back-country skiing a couple times a season. Having a full-time work schedule, these days are generally on weekends.

Due to convenience, most of our skiing is at the Forest Service Administrative site on Beaver Reservoir Road, which is groomed by South Fork Nordic Club. Since there is no vehicle traffic at this site, no comment has been made, other than allowing the mechanized grooming equipment on site to groom the ski trail is greatly appreciated. We have volunteered with this group maintaining these trails.

The Big Meadows and Rock Creek trails (groomed by the San Juan Ski Club) are other primary skiing locations. We greatly appreciate the Forest Service allowing these sites to be groomed, and that snowmobiles are precluded from both sites to allow a quiet ski on generally undisturbed tracks. I have been disappointed at Big Meadows only probably three or four times (in eight seasons) at snowmobile users driving into the campground area regardless of signs indicating these are ski trails. Kathy and I both had one experience on the shared road above the trail head of a snowmobile buzzing by at an excessive speed. To be fair, the vast majority of snowmobile operators have been courteous, usually slowing down as soon as they see a skier, and friendly to talk with. We certainly understand the terrain limits the trail options, and users need to work together where it's not practical to separate the uses.

The Rock Creek site we have never experienced a snowmobile or other conflict, and also appreciate this site able to be groomed by motorized equipment. Kathy and I both are on the SJNC Board and volunteer on trail maintenance days and other events.

We occasionally (few times a season, usually early in winter) ski at the Alberta Meadows area (groomed by Wolf Creek Ski), and appreciate this area permitted for non-motorized use (other than trail grooming).

Finally, we occasionally (once or twice a season) back country ski in the Lobo Peak area. While we don't back country ski too often, we have frequently in past years, and understand the passion for undisturbed areas.

Having some area reserved for entirely non-motorized/non-groomed winter recreation is greatly appreciated by ourselves and the silent sport community.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments, although I doubt there are any unique "substantive" comments contained here. We hope the process is smooth and all commenters /users are reasonable, respectful and understanding of other users' needs and the need to work together and with the Forest Service on this process.

If we can be of service please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Terry Daley

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