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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Tyler Albers and I am a resident of Pagosa Springs, CO. I am an avid backcountry over the snow recreator and I would like to comment on the Over-Snow Travel Management Project taking place on the Rio Grande National Forest. I started my backcountry over snow recreation in the early 2000's as a telemark skier. I learned to telemark ski on the Rio Grande and San Juan National Forests and spent many days touring near Wolf Creek Pass and Elwood Cabin. In 2014 I was in a life altering accident that restricted me from the backcountry touring I fell in love with. I was forced to find an alternative method to recreate over the snow and discovered snowmobiling. Snowmobiling has made it possible for me to enjoy the public land I love and instills the same feeling I once had when skiing.

I have reviewed the Proposed Action and here are my comments/concerns:

*I do not support the reduction of snowmobile opportunities unless it is for the protection of big game species while residing in winter range.

*All access motorized and non-motorized should be restricted in big game winter range. Including mountain lion hunting activities.

*A minimum snow depth on roads of 12 inches seems to be very subjective and could lead to issues. I can name many roads on the Rio Grande National Forest that are groomed that have sections melt out when there is still feet of snow on the sides of the road.

*The desired ROS map has a small portion of Primitive labeled outside the Wilderness Boundary near Summit Peak. This is an area I have snowmobiled and skied. I feel the designation of Primitive in this location is incorrect. I do not support this area as Primitive and would prefer for it to be labeled as Semi-Primitive Motorized.

*Over snow user conflicts seem to be minimal on the Rio Grande National Forest. Historic use in specific areas seem to be managing themselves. I do not support new restrictions based on one recreation type over another and motorized vs non-motorized. User conflicts need to be managed with education. Colorado Snowmobile Association and local clubs (motorized or non-motorized) are an asset as a partner for this type of education.

*Are groomed snowmobile trails that overlap suitable lynx habitat closed outside of December 1 to March 31 or just not groomed?

*I am very confused with what type of planning criteria the USFS uses to manage Canada Lynx and Canada Lynx Habitat. Is 2008 the most accurate data for Lynx Management?

*I do not support the Wolf Creek Ski Area obtaining anymore acreage or buffers on either National Forests.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in this planning effort. I intend to be very active in the development of this decision.