

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/15/2024 4:15:40 AM

First name: Aaron

Last name: Carpenter

Organization:

Title:

Comments: 1.I generally support the draft map, although the colors used for planning documents and maps are creating confusion as areas that are closed and areas that are the planning area boundary are using the same color. This should be fixed.

2. There is a long history of winter recreation in these Forest areas without conflict between uses and this needs to be the starting point for this study and future decisions.

3. I am able to support the flexibility in the Proposal regarding the measurement of snow depth and when usage is allowed. Snow depth and profiles are crucial to not only the enjoyment of snow sports, but also the impact they have on the ground and vegetation below.

4. The proposal again raises concerns about the need to restrict access to protect Canadian Lynx. This seems to be in response to lawsuits brought against the Rio Grande after the release of their 2019 RMP. The snowmobile community has supported the USFS decisions made in the RMP and intervened in the litigation to defend these claims with the USFS. The concerns raised conflict with new USFWS planning tools that have removed motorized usage as a threat to the Lynx and only requires Lynx be counted in motorized recreation areas.

5. The proposal appears to require exclusionary areas around Continental Divide Trail and several others in several places. This would section areas of the forest and prevent motorized use across these boundaries. This concept was successfully objected to by the motorized community in the RMP development and we are asking that the CDNST and other trails be managed in the manner that the USFS argued for in their recent Supreme Court effort where motorized usage was protected. The concept of single use recreation on Congressionally designated trails merely because of their designation was presented to the Supreme Court and the Court declined to apply this interpretation.

6. I am concerned that nonmotorized groomed routes on the Rio Grande NF (there are several miles of these routes) do not appear to be addressed in minimization of impacts. While these areas are closed to snowmobile, and should remain closed, these area opportunities for recreational usage that should be identified when opportunities area balanced, or impacts minimized.

7. I am concerned that the proposal does identify Colorado Roadless areas as a desired characteristic for nonmotorized users. It is desirable for motorized usage as well and motorized usage is specifically identified as a characteristic of a Roadless Area. I ask that the proposal provide no preference for any usage and only address road construction and maintenance and specifically protects trails.

8. The proposal also plans to protect non-motorized uses adjacent to Wilderness areas. This is illegal as the Colorado Wilderness Act specifically prohibits buffers around Congressionally designated Wilderness. I am not asking to illegally ride in Wilderness areas, but I am asking to have to have a full opportunity to ride outside the Wilderness areas.

9. I specifically use this forest for motorized use in the Cumbres Pass area. It is my experience in this area that there is good balance and respect between motorized and non-motorized users in the winter. The wilderness boundaries are respected. I have not personally experienced any conflict between different users of the land in the winter. There are very few over-the-snow motorized users in the area, and I ask that we are able to continue using this forest and other areas in the proposal in a balanced and respectful manner.