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Title:

Comments: I grew up in the Rio Grande National Forrest: specifically in the special use permit of Wolf Creek Ski Area, as well as the adjacent Lobo Overlook Area and in the neighboring San Juan National Forrest. Therefore this Rio Grande National Forrest Over-Snow Management Project is very important to me. Since 1992 I have been an avid skier at Wolf Creek Ski Area, and from 1998 on I have enjoyed backcountry skiing-mostly in the Lobo Overlook Area. Recently (between 2020 to current) I have seen a huge increase in Motorized users- specifically Timber-sleds, and high performance snowmobiles. These new users have impacted my high quality over-snow experience as a back country skier/snowboarder in the Rio Grande National Forrest and as a season pass holder at Wolf Creek Ski Area.

As a backcountry skier the impact I have felt the most by high performance over snow motorized machines is by the ruts and deep trails they leave on steep terrain. These deep tracks are very dangerous to hit as a skier, and have sent me sprawling head first many times. To make the steep terrain accessible from Lobo Overlook non-motorized would make it safer for back country skiers and snowboarders.

In general non-motorized over snow users are not compatible with motorized users. The machines the motorized users have are so powerful they could accidentally kill a skier if they lost control of the machine, or where unaware of the non-motorized (nordic/snowshoe/skier/snowboarder) because there machine is so load and they can travel so fast.

As a avid skier/snowboarder at Wolf Creek Ski Area the impact I have experienced most is a huge increase in noise pollution from high performance over snow motorized machines that are coming really close to the permit boundary and sometimes I have actually seen them enter the Special Use Permit Area. These machines are super loud and take away from the pristine mountain experience I and so many other skiers and snowboarders enjoy when being at Wolf Creek Ski Area. I would recommend the Rio Grande National Forrest Service put a non-motorized buffer zone around the ski area, and Lobo Overlook and all Nordic areas to help these users continue to have a high quality over-snow access and experience.

I also believe there should be a buffer zone for safety reasons. As explained above, the new motorized users have machines that are so powerful they could easily kill or hurt someone if they ran into them. If a timber sled lands on a Wolf Pup going down Kelly Boyce it will be terrible situation. To avoid this from happening a non-motorized buffer zone must be established around the ski area and where all non-motorized use designated in the WROS maps are.

I believe there is a strong need for Motorized Over-Snow Management in this beautiful forrest. The Winter Recreation Opportunity Spectrum map that will be produced must have physical buffer zones of non-motorized use around the areas that will get the designation non-motorized. I have felt direct negative affects with the increase use of snowmobilers and Timber-sleds in the Rio Grande National Forrest as a non-motorized user.