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First name: Action

Last name: Committee

Organization: Capital Trail Vehicle Association

Title: Action Committee

Comments: ML 3 Roads to Trails - Reclassify ML3 roads to ML2 roads. Reclassify ML2 road to motorized trails or manage appropriate ML2 roads as "roads managed as trails." Manage appropriate ML1 roads as "motorized trails."

ML 2 Roads to Trails - Convert "roads-to-single track trails" or "roads-to-motorized trails less than 50 inches in width" and "roads managed as motorized trails greater than 50 inches in width" as a tool to help the agency achieve its budget objectives while still providing a substantive and high quality recreational route network.

Single Track Trails - 2005 Forest Service Travel Management Rule (TMR) Subpart B planning efforts in California and other Western States resulted in the loss of many, if not most, of our historic single-track motorcycle trails. Historic and legal motorized single-track opportunities such as enduro trails, old pack-mule/mining or pioneer trails were simply eliminated from consideration due to time constraints.

During Subpart B of Travel Management, the Forest Service promised OHV leadership that once these initial "foundational" route networks were established and codified that they would work with the users to either bring some of these historic single-track opportunities "back onto the system" or construct new engineered single-track system trails.

CTVA believes that a strategy should be developed to replace the lost single-track experience. Retention or enhancement of high quality single-track dirt-bike trails is no different than keeping or enhancing "quiet" single-track hiking, equestrian, and mountain-bike trails.

Wet Weather Closures - Any TMR-based wet weather closure strategy should allow for native surfaced trails and roads to be open when soil conditions/lack-of-rainfall permits. If a wet weather closure is needed, the implementing Forest Order should be for the shortest period of time rather than a longer time period. In NEPA, it is always easier to extend a short closure versus repealing a longer closure.

Mitigate Trail Impacts from Non-Recreation Projects - The impacts from non-recreation projects such as vegetative treatments and wildlife protection efforts often include obliteration of the trail or removal of water control structures such as rolling dips and catch basins. Those trail mitigations can often cost \$15,000 to \$20,000/mile to install (or replace). CTVA recommends that "trail mitigation" guidelines be added to relevant non-recreation projects.

It does not feel to use that the Forest Service is meeting the requirements of the Multiple-Use Act and Sustained Yield Act. We would like to see documentation in the EIS on how the Forest Service feels they are meeting the requirements of the Multiple-Use Act and Sustained Yield Act.

Motorized recreationists including motorcycles, ATVs, and 4x4 value highly semi-primitive and primitive motorized recreational opportunities. There is a great need for these opportunities and there is a real shortage of these opportunities due to current management trends. Also, motorized recreationists like to ride on motorized trails to remote trailheads, park, and hike from there.

8. There is no need for additional Wilderness for recreational usage based on the following information. Wilderness also includes all defacto Wilderness areas such as non-motorized Roadless areas and designated non-motorized areas such as proposed for the Planning area.

a) Twenty percent of USFS trails are in Wilderness areas (Source #1 below), and these areas receive only 4% of all visitor days to USFS lands (Source #2). Routes in Wilderness areas are difficult and exceptionally expensive to maintain, due to strict management limitations (Source #3). Teams of horses and mules can move large amounts of materials but are not cost effective when compared to a pickup truck, and the maintenance equipment cannot be left on the mules overnight.

i.#1. United States Government Accountability Office Report GAO-13-618; Forest Service Trails; Long- and Short-Term Improvements Could Reduce Maintenance Backlog and Enhance System Sustainability; June 2013 at page 30. Complete report is available here: <http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/655555.pdf>

ii.#2. USDA Forest Service; National Visitor Use Monitoring Results USDA Forest Service National Summary Report Data collected FY 2008 through FY 2012 Last updated 20 May 2013; at page 8.

iii. United States Government Accountability Office Report GAO-13-618; Forest Service Trails; Long- and Short-Term Improvements Could Reduce Maintenance Backlog and Enhance System Sustainability; June 2013 at page 30.

b) The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently identified that motorized users are the only ones who "pay to play" on USFS trails. And even with this funding, only 25% of all routes are financially sustainable due to high percentages of routes in Wilderness designations (Source #4). If motorized funding is not available for management of dispersed recreational opportunities, the resources available to maintain any trail greatly diminish and possible impacts expand.

i.#4. United States Government Accountability Office Report GAO-13-618; Forest Service Trails; Long- and Short-Term Improvements Could Reduce Maintenance Backlog and Enhance System Sustainability; June 2013 at page 30.

c) The true economic driver for local economies is multiple-use recreation on public lands. USFS comparisons of user group spending profiles, made as part of the National Visitor Use Monitoring process, estimate that the motorized user spends 2 to 3 times the amount of money spent by non-motorized users (Source #5). This compounds the possibility of negative economic impacts to local communities from significantly lower levels of visitation after Wilderness designations.

i.#5. USDA Forest Service; White and Stynes et al; Updated Spending Profiles for National Forest Recreation Visitors by Activity November 2010 at page 6.

d) Many Wilderness Proposals erroneously rely on the newly released Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) Report that concluded that \$646 billion is annually spent on outdoor recreation. Wilderness Proposals frequently assert this was the result of quiet use recreation. This is simply incorrect, as the 2012 OIA study included motorized usage in their analysis (Source #6). Previously, versions of the OIA study attempted to only include non-motorized usage.

i.#6 Outdoor Industry Association; The Outdoor Recreation Economy; Take it Outside for American Jobs and a Strong Economy; 2012 report.

e) A recent USFS report to Senator Mark Udall (D-CO) specifically stated that Wilderness Areas are a significant factor contributing to poor forest health and the outbreak of mountain pine beetle throughout the western U.S. (Source #7). This position has been repeatedly stated by the Colorado State Forest Service, which has found management restrictions in Wilderness Areas have caused significant outbreaks of Spruce Beetle infestations (Source #8). USFS guidelines for management and protection of watersheds identify the critical need for active management of watersheds to insure water quality (Source #9). This management is impossible in a Wilderness Area. Limited forest management is specifically identified as a major factor negatively impacting endangered species such as the Canadian lynx (Source #10).

i.#7. USDA Forest Service; Review of the Forest Service Response: The Bark Beetle Outbreak in Northern Colorado and Southern Wyoming; September 2011; at pages i, 5, 12. Complete report is available here: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/barkbeetle/home/?cid=stelprdb5340741>

ii.#8. Colorado State Forest Service; 2012 Report on the Health of Colorado's Forests; Forest Steward Ship

through Active Management; at page 5. A copy of this report is available here:

<http://csfs.colostate.edu/pdfs/137233-forestreport-12-www.pdf> .

iii.#9 Executive Summary; PROTECTING FRONT RANGE FOREST WATERSHEDS FROM HIGH-SEVERITY WILDFIRES AN ASSESSMENT BY THE PINCHOT INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION FUNDED BY THE FRONT RANGE FUELS TREATMENT PARTNERSHIP. A complete copy of this report is available here.

[http://www.pinchot.org/gp/Colorado\\_watersheds](http://www.pinchot.org/gp/Colorado_watersheds)

iv.#10 Interagency Lynx Biology Team. 2013. Canada lynx conservation assessment and strategy. 3rd edition. USDA Forest Service, USDI Fish and Wildlife Service, USDI Bureau of Land Management, and USDI National Park Service. Forest Service Publication R1-13-19, Missoula, MT. 128 pp. at page 75.

f)The critical need for motorized access to multiple-use recreation was recently identified by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). It found that a lack of motorized access was the largest single barrier to those wanting to hunt and fish (Source #11). A lack of multiple-use access is also identified as a significant limitation to herd management and herd health (Source #12).

i.#11. National Shooting Sports Foundation; Issues Related to Hunting Access in the United States; Final Report November 2010 at page 7, 13, 56.

ii.#12National Shooting Sports Foundation; Issues Related to Hunting Access in the United States; Final Report November 2010 at page 11.

g)Agency inventories and determinations on possible designations of Roadless Areas are not management decisions, but are rather inventories of characteristics of that area. Roadless areas are still governed by multiple-use management and changes to management require NEPA analysis or Congressional action. There are significant limitations on the scope of the Roadless Rule, as it only applies to new road construction or major reconstructions. Trails, even those over 50 inches wide, are not impacted by the Roadless Rule. Many areas that are involved in citizen Wilderness Proposals have been inventoried and found to be unsuitable for Roadless designation and this should weigh heavily against any suitability for Wilderness designation.

OHV recreationists need beginner loops near camping areas for those learning to use their machines and those not able to go on longer excursions.

Motorized recreationists carry chainsaws and keep trails open for everybody. This is a significant point given the amount of beetle killed trees that are falling across trails. On a recent ride on the CDNST between Champion Pass and Lowland Campground, motorized recreationists had recently cleared over 100 fallen trees from the trail. On a following weekend motorized recreationists cleared over 200 fallen trees from the CDNST near Bull Ranch. Our observations indicate that if motorized recreationists are not allowed to clear the trails through their use then the trail will be largely closed by downfall within two years.

The agencies created the wolf predation on wildlife problem by their support for the re-introduction of wolves. Motorized recreationists should not be tagged as creating that problem or having anywhere near as significant an impact on wildlife as wolves or be used as mitigation for wolf problems.

While Revised Statute 2477 was repealed by the 1976 National Forest Management Act, the revision clearly stated in the Act was to insure that no new roads from the effective date of the Act would be considered for RS 2477 consideration. It further clarified the historical highways would be honored. That is all that the 1976 Act modified or repealed. Until the federal government completely repeals the 1866 Act, (Revised by the 1872 Act) in its entirety the citizens of the United States still have the right to access lands for the benefit of the people of the United States. The decision rendered by the 10th circuit re-affirms this

(<http://www.kscourts.org/ca10/datefile/datefile.htm> look under 9-8-2005, and then 04-4071 - Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance v. Bureau of Land Management). The court has ruled that the rights exercised by the counties would be valid if the routes in question were indeed 2477 classified. The county has records that show that the routes were there prior to the establishment of the 1976 NFMA and FLPMA and, are therefore, valid RS

2477 routes. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the agency proposing a closure action to adequately research those records and establish which routes meet RS 2477 classification and then consult and coordinate with the County with respect to that classification. The Forest Plan project area includes many important RS 2477 routes that were established by miners, loggers, and early settlers. We request that this project include adequate research of the county records and adequate formal consultation and coordination with the county to identify RS 2477 routes and include them as historic motorized routes.

The most equitable management of public lands is for multiple-uses. Congress recognized this need with many laws including the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 (16 U.S.C. 528 et seq.) and National Forest Management Act of 1976. Multiple-Use was defined as "The management of all the various renewable surface resources of the national forests so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the needs of the American people...". Outdoor recreation is the first stated purpose of the act. Note that the pre-Columbian management scheme has not been enacted by Congress. Therefore, the Forest Service has a responsibility to provide recreational opportunities that meet the needs of the public just as government entities provide road, water and wastewater systems that meet the needs of the public.

Public Law 88-657 states that "the Congress hereby finds and declares that the construction and maintenance of an adequate system of roads and trails within and near the national forests and other lands administered by the Forest Service is essential if increasing demands for timber, recreation, and other uses of such lands are to be met; that the existence of such a system would have the effect, among other things, of increasing the value of timber and other resources tributary to such roads; and that such a system is essential to enable the Secretary of Agriculture (hereinafter called the Secretary) to provide for intensive use, protection, development, and management of these lands under principles of multiple use and sustained yield of products and services."

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) states that "(7) goals and objectives be established by law as guidelines for public land use planning, and that management be on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield unless otherwise specified by law; and, (c) In the development and revision of land use plans, the Secretary shall -- (1) use and observe the principles of multiple use and sustained yield set forth in this and other applicable law;"

Multiple-use management goals are the only goals that will "best meet the needs" of the public and provide for equal program delivery to all citizens including motorized visitors. All of visitors have a responsibility to accept and promote diversity of recreation on public lands. Diversity of recreation opportunities can only be accomplished through management for multiple-uses and reasonable coexistence among visitors. Multiple-use lands must be managed for shared-use versus segregated-use or exclusive-use. Multiple-use lands are public places. Segregation in public places has not been acceptable since the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

OHV recreation is extremely popular in Idaho and growing as shown in the following reference. Registration statistics in 2011 show that there are 134,392 OHVs ([http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Recreation/11\\_OHV\\_Registrations.pdf](http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Recreation/11_OHV_Registrations.pdf)) Note that many OHVs are used by multiple residents. At 500 miles per year per OHV (a very conservative estimate), the total miles driven per year in Idaho would equal 67,000,000 miles. At an average speed of 18 miles per hour, the total hours of OHV recreation per year in Idaho is conservatively estimated at 3,733,000 hours. At a value of \$25 per hour the total value to the economy on Idaho is conservatively estimated at \$93,327,000. Therefore, OHV recreation is a significant part of the economy in Idaho and in the Project Area.

Using a conservative estimate of 30 miles per visit and an average speed of 18 miles per hour, OHV visitors to the National Forest travel 9,810,000 miles (327,000 x 30) and recreate at least 545,000 hours on their OHVs. The magnitude of these values indicates a significant need for OHV routes and a significant value in the use of those routes.

The Government Accounting Office (GAO) has recently released a report with recommendations on long- and short-term improvements that could reduce maintenance backlog and enhance the sustainability of trails on the public lands (<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-618> ). Specific recommendations include Agency officials and stakeholders GAO interviewed collectively identified numerous options to improve Forest Service trail maintenance, including (1) assessing the sustainability of the trail system, (2) improving agency policies and procedures, and (3) improving management of volunteers and other external resources. In a 2010 document titled A Framework for Sustainable Recreation, the Forest Service noted the importance of analyzing recreation program needs and available resources and assessing potential ways to narrow the gap between them, which the agency has not yet done for its trails. Many officials and stakeholders suggested that the agency systematically assess its trail system to identify ways to reduce the gap and improve trail system sustainability. They also identified other options for improving management of volunteers. For example, while the agency's goal in the Forest Service Manual is to use volunteers, the agency has not established collaboration with and management of volunteers who help maintain trails as clear expectations for trails staff responsible for working with volunteers, and training in this area is limited. Some agency officials and stakeholders stated that training on how to collaborate with and manage volunteers would enhance the agency's ability to capitalize on this resource. CTVA has a long history of collaboration on trail construction and maintenance projects that we would like to continue to build on.

Additionally, OHV recreation generates millions of dollars in OHV gas tax revenues which should be used to for trail maintenance (see additional comments and Oak Ridge National Laboratory, 1994, Federal Highway Administration, Report ORNL/TM-1999/100, Federal Highway Administration, An 80 page summary of the fuel used for OHV recreation, [http://www-cta.ornl.gov/cta/Publications/Reports/ORNLTM\\_1999\\_100.pdf](http://www-cta.ornl.gov/cta/Publications/Reports/ORNLTM_1999_100.pdf) ). Unfortunately, these dollars are not being applied to OHV trails. Bringing volunteers together with funding would solve nearly all of our OHV trail maintenance needs.

The use of "unauthorized trails or roads or user-created routes" is not an appropriate term as many of these routes were created during periods going back to the 1800's when the forest was managed without designated routes, cross-country travel was allowed, and access and use of the forest was encouraged. Many of these routes have been used for decades and are "historic routes". Many of these routes are shown on versions of the forest map, and 7.5 minute and 15 minute USGS quadrangle mapping. The use of "unauthorized trails or roads or user-created routes" is an inaccurate representation of the management conditions and uses allowed in the past. These are also terms developed by non-motorized interests that have been given an inaccurate negative connotation through their campaigns. We request that this term be dropped from the text and that these routes be recognized as appropriate routes in the analysis.

Motorized recreationists generate significant levels of funding that would be available if the agency would pursue them and the system was working to distribute them equitably. The magnitude of gas tax paid by OHV recreationists is significant. Fuel used for off-road motorcycle, atv and 4-wheel drive recreation in Idaho is estimated at 23,890,142 gallons per year (Report ORNL/TM-1999/100, Federal Highway Administration [http://www-cta.ornl.gov/cta/Publications/Reports/ORNLTM\\_1999\\_100.pdf](http://www-cta.ornl.gov/cta/Publications/Reports/ORNLTM_1999_100.pdf) ). Federal gas tax paid by OHV recreationists living in Idaho is significant and is estimated at \$4,395,786 (\$0.184 tax per gallon times 23,890,142 gallons per year). The present worth of this annual amount over the past 30 years is over \$60,000,000.

The agency has overlooked one important aspect of the visitor use data. The visitor use data cited above is based on a percent of the total population. However, the percent of the total population visiting our public lands is a fraction of the total population. Public lands should be managed for those people that actually visit them. We request that this adjustment be made in this evaluation.

The total number of individuals that visit our national forests is about 56 million (personal communication Don English, National Visitors Use Monitoring Program, Forest Service, November 29, 2005). Our total U.S. population is about 286 million (2000 Census Data). Therefore, only about 20% (56 million/286 million) of the

total U.S. population actually visits our national forests. This number needs to be used as the denominator (baseline) for total forest visitors.

Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth recognized the true popularity and magnitude of motorized recreation in his January 16, 2004 speech which stated "Off-highway vehicles, or OHVs, are a great way to experience the outdoors. But the number of OHV users has just gotten huge. It grew from about 5 million in 1972 to almost 36 million in 2000." We agree with the Forest Chief that 36 million is a significant number of recreationists. Additionally, the USDA Southern Research Station has recently validated the growing popularity of OHV recreation in their Recreation Statistics Update Report No. 3 dated October 2004 (<http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/trends/RecStatUpdate3.pdf>). This document reports that the total number of OHV users has grown from 36 million to 49.6 million or 38% by the fall 2003/spring 2004. Based on the 2000 estimates OHV and motorized recreationists are about 64% of the population that actually visits the forest (36 million / 56 million).

This is further substantiated on page 9 of a report prepared by National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE 2000) titled Outdoor Recreation Participation in the United States (<http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/trends/Nsre/summary1.pdf>) which asks the question "During the past 12 months. Did you go sightseeing, driving for pleasure or driving ATVs or motorcycles?" The percent responding "Yes" was 63.1% and the total number in millions was estimated at 130.8 million. Additionally, NSRE is often referenced by the agency but the summary statistics are skewed against motorized recreation because driving for pleasure and OHV use are split out as separate groups. These two groups represent motorized recreation and if they are added together they are as large as any other group in the survey which correctly demonstrates the magnitude of motorized recreation.

Additionally, the Southern Research Station in their report Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation in the United States, Regions and States ([http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/OHV\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/OHV_final_report.pdf)) determined that of the total U.S. population in the West 27.3% participated in OHV recreation and that out of the total population in Idaho 33.5% participated in OHV recreation. It appears that the study is diluting the actual percentage of OHV recreationists by using total population and not the population actually visiting and using the forest. As discussed above only 20% of the total U.S. population visits the forest. The percentage of Idahoans that actually visit our national forests is higher than the national average and is estimated at ½ of the total state population. Based on this estimate, it is our opinion that about 67% (33.5% x 2) of the actual visitors to Idaho national forests participate in OHV recreation.

These surveys and data demonstrates the significant popularity of motorized and OHV recreation and the tremendous public support and need for motorized and OHV recreational opportunities. We maintain that motorized recreationists are the main group of visitors out of the total population of visitors to the national forest visiting the forest 5 or more days per year. The needs and support of motorized recreationists must be adequately addressed in this planning effort by preserving all reasonable existing motorized recreational opportunities. This planning effort must also adequately address the increasing popularity by creating new motorized recreational opportunities.

The Southern Research Station in their report Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation in the United States, Regions and States ([http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/OHV\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/OHV_final_report.pdf)) determined that out of the total population in Idaho 33.5% participated in OHV recreation. The U.S. census determined that the population in 2010 was 1,567,652 (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/30000.html>). Therefore, the number of OHV recreationists in Idaho is at least 1,567,652 times 0.335 = 320,800.

Sadly, one indicator of the condition of the human environment in Idaho is the suicide rate. Idaho ranks number 7 in the nation (<http://www.suicide.org/suicide-statistics.html>). This significant problem has been specifically identified as requiring special attention by everyone. Motorized recreation is popular and it is a very healthy and

positive human activity that can help address this significant human issue (<http://www.marketwire.com/press-release/The-Results-Are-in-Off-Road-Vehicle-Riding-is-Good-for-Your-Body-and-Soul-1310189.htm> ). The Forest Service can help address this significant problem by providing an adequate quantity and quality of motorized recreational opportunities. We ask that you adequately address this significant issue associated with the human environment.

The positive economic impact on the economy of the area is another socio-economic factor that must be adequately considered in the decision-making and especially during this times of economic recession. Arizona State Parks has prepared a good example of an economic analysis of OHV recreation for Coconino County, AZ ([http://www.gf.state.az.us/pdfs/w\\_c/OHV%20Report.pdf](http://www.gf.state.az.us/pdfs/w_c/OHV%20Report.pdf)). The economic impacts of OHV recreation in one county are significant with \$258.3 million statewide impact and a \$215.3 million impact locally that supports 2,580 jobs. Off-highway vehicle recreation activity is an immensely powerful part of the Arizona collective economic fabric, generating nearly \$3 billion in retail sales during 2002 ([http://www.gf.state.az.us/pdfs/w\\_c/OHV%20Report.pdf](http://www.gf.state.az.us/pdfs/w_c/OHV%20Report.pdf) ).