

Alliance for Multiple Uses

I represent citizens who are concerned about the future of recreation on Montana's public land. With more and more east coast environmental groups gaining power in state and federal legislatures, public land is being locked up by the minute. "Over the last few years, so-called 'environmental organizations' have influenced our government to a point that the people are being systematically locked out of their public lands. All forms of access and active management are under attack. The decisions often end up in court with the people ultimately paying the price. With the snowmobilers fighting one war and the cattlemen fighting another, public land users find themselves alone and divided. Together, all public land users - from mountain bikers to hunters, to fishermen to ATVers, and snowmobilers - can create a very large, very loud voice." Kerry White Chairman of CBU.

Since 2000 the U.S. Forest service (USFS) has been contemplating six different alternatives for access on Montana's public lands. Over 11,000 public comments have been submitted to the USFS. Although the alternative that was selected was not what the multiple users wanted, it's a step away from what the extreme environmental groups wanted. These groups believe in locking up all of Montana's land, thus, locking up land to ATVers, snowmobilers, and other types of multiple use. These groups push for Wilderness land only. Wilderness only allows foot and horseback travel.

Many times during the year search and rescue groups are called into the mountains to assist not only lost citizens, but hurt or trapped people as well. Think of this scenario. You and your friends go skiing into the wilderness backcountry of Montana. Meanwhile you are caught in an avalanche and break your leg. Would you rather have another skier traveling at 5 mph coming to your assistance or a snowmobile traveling at 40 mph? I think we would all prefer the snowmobile since it will get you to help faster, and you will have a better chance of survival. In wilderness areas snowmobiles are prohibited, even during search rescues; this means you will be stranded for 7 times longer than you would be when a snowmobile is coming to aid you. This is not the only problem

- Wilderness prohibits forest health management (tree thinning by logging)
- Over years these forests become overgrown and prone to fire
- Wilderness prohibits motorized travel even during search operations
- Wilderness areas are closed to all motorized mechanical items this includes chainsaws for the clearing of trails and restoration.
- Wilderness also cannot be changed out of wilderness; once it is wilderness, it will be forever

In the above paragraphs and bulleted sections I have shown the reasons by which I support multiple use and discourage wilderness as a source of management. As citizens of Montana, we should push for multiple use to keep our heritage alive.

I will support legislation that prohibits land from becoming wilderness, or allowing motorized travel in wilderness for search and rescue reasons possible.

This document is in compliance with the Montana YMCA Youth Legislature Lobbyist Disclosure Policy

