Editor:

Regarding the Shoshone National Forest, the people have spoken. In overwhelming numbers they told the Forest Service that in these magnificent mountains, conservation is more important than development.

Unfortunately, the recently released final forest plan indicates that the Forest Service is deaf to public opinion.

Of the 23,475 comments received from folks throughout the United States (who own these public lands), 98 percent supported conservation measures like recommending additional wilderness and opposing expanding motorized use into areas where it isn’t allowed now.

Even more interesting, 75 percent of the letters on motorized use from Wyoming residents opposed increasing motorized access. Ninety percent of Wyoming residents who wrote about wilderness wanted the Forest Service to recommend at least some of the highest priority areas for wilderness.

But what do we see in the final forest plan? No recommended wilderness - that’s right, none whatsoever. Expanded motorized use in Wood River, Francs Peak, and the Wiggins Fork/Bear Creek/East Fork drainages. Snowmobiling allowed in crucial big game winter range above Dubois and all along the Lander Front. Mountain biking allowed in the Dunoir Special Management Unit.

The Shoshone National Forest belongs to the people of the United States. Their comments and opinions should matter, no matter where they are from or how they are sent in.

Many people have formally objected to expanding development as described in the final plan. I call on the Forest Service to resolve their objections by respecting the wishes of the overwhelming numbers of Wyoming residents and nonresidents alike, to maintain the wild and rugged heritage of this unique and beautiful area.
Wyoming is blessed with lots of places to run motorized vehicles. Keep the Shoshone wild and undeveloped, don’t expand motorized use into new areas, and recommend some of the most outstanding of the outstanding wild country as wilderness. These mountains have served us well up to now and with foresight and good judgment that will continue well into the future.

BARRY REISWIG, Cody

Tags  Forest Service, Environment, Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, Shoshone National Forest, Francs Peak, Fitzpatrick Wilderness, Washakie Wilderness, Wood River, Wiggins Fork Bear Creek, Dunoir Special Management Unit, Barry Reiswig

Copyright 2014 Casper Star-Tribune Online. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.