



# Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

February 13, 1997

**TO:** Environmental Quality Council, P.O. Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704  
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Director's Office, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901  
Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Director's Office  
Regional Supervisors  
Fisheries Division  
Wildlife Division  
Legal Unit  
Jeff Erickson

Flathead National Forest, 1935 Third Ave. E., Kalispell, MT 59901  
Lewis and Clark National Forest, P.O. Box 869, Great Falls, MT 59403  
MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202  
MT Wilderness Association, P.O. Box 635, Helena, MT 59601  
MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620  
Island Range Chapter-WMA 1400 1st Ave. N. Rm. 36, Great Falls, MT 59401  
Northwest Field Office - MWA, 43 Woodland Park Dr. #9, Kalispell MT 59901  
James Jensen, MT Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624  
Janet Ellis, MT Audubon Council, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624  
George Ochenski, P.O. Box 689, Helena, MT 59624  
Montana Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624  
Wayne Hurst, P.O. Box 728, Libby, MT 59923  
Paul Hickman, State Parks Assoc., P.O. Box 699, Billings, MT 59103  
Friends of the Bitterroot, P.O. Box 442, Hamilton, MT 59840  
Cut Bank Snowgoers, Inc., P.O. Box 301, Cut Bank, MT 59427  
Alliance for the Wild Rockies, P.O. Box 8731, Missoula, MT 59807  
Glacier -Two Medicine Alliance, P.O. Box 181, East Glacier, MT 59434  
Friends of the Rocky Mountain Front, P.O. Box 763, Choteau, MT 59422

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) Decision Notice is for the Cut Bank Snowgoers , INC. snowmobile club groomed snowmobile trails, and is submitted for your consideration. If you have questions, please contact Regional Park Manager, Dave Todd at (406) 454-5840, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, P.O. Box 6610, Great Falls, Montana 59406.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Mike Aderhold  
Regional Supervisor

Glacier



# **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

## **DECISION NOTICE**

**Cut Bank Snowgoers, Inc.  
Snowmobile Grooming Grant  
Environmental Assessment**

**February 13, 1997**

### **PROPOSED ACTION:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks proposes to continue to award Cut Bank Snowgoers, Inc., annual state snowmobile grants for a snowmobile recreation program at Marias Pass.

The 76-mile groomed trail system is described in a December 9, 1996, Environmental Assessment that was circulated for a 30 day public comment. Contacts: Region 4, FWP Parks Manager Dave Todd, P.O. Box 6610, Great Falls MT 59406, Phone 406-454-5840, and FWP Trails Coordinator Bob Walker, P.O. Box 200701, Helena MT 59620-0701, Phone 406-444-4585.

The Marias Pass Snowmobile Program is a four-party partnership involving Flathead National Forest, Lewis and Clark National Forest, Cut Bank Snowgoers, Inc., and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The program involves public resources and is subject to continual public scrutiny. FWP's proposed action exists with the understanding that if significant problems are identified with wildlife impacts, preserving Wilderness or maintaining the "wilderness character" of a Wilderness Study Area, adjustments can and will be made in the groomed trail system. Such changes will involve all of the partners in the program.

The Montana Snowmobile Grant Program operates under the authority of State Laws 60-3-201(5), MCA, and 23-2-616, MCA. A description and history of this grant program are found on pages 2-5, Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, Montana Snowmobile Grant Program, September 1993, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 150 pps.

## **HISTORY:**

**Cut Bank Snowgoers, Inc., is a community-based, family-oriented recreation organization with a 25 year plus history. Currently the group has 320 members. One hundred and ten members also belong to the Montana Snowmobile Association.**

**The Club owns a snow grooming machine and has independent funds. For the last 20 years they have groomed a trail system at Marias Pass that was between 50 and 100 miles in length. This decade they have reduced their groomed trail system twenty percent. The present groomed system is 76 miles in length and there are no proposals to increase it. Today's groomed trails have been in place for thirteen years. The snowmobile season runs from Dec. 1 to April 1.**

**In 1990, FWP decided to bring all of its snowmobile grant programs in compliance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). In 1993 a Programmatic EIS was published for the Snowmobile Grant Program. In this EIS the various snowmobile organizations were given three years to document, with an Environmental Assessment (EA), their on-the-ground programs or forfeit the opportunity to qualify for state snowmobile grants.**

**Several snowmobile organizations, including the Cut Bank Snowgoers, pushed the deadline. Late in 1996 several EA's were released in a short time prompting concern from the environmental community and the Montana Wilderness Association (MWA) in particular.**

**MWA made off road vehicle use a subject of their annual meeting, December 6-8, 1996. They later released an "action alert" to their membership, questioning the State's snowmobile program. Many erroneously perceived the program to be new and rapidly expanding. Over 200 letters were sent to various FWP offices.**

**Snowmobilers, sensing a threat to their grant monies, responded with another hundred letters pushing in the opposite direction.**

## MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT PROCESS

FWP is required by MEPA to assess impacts to the human and natural environment. The Cut Bank Snowgoers' grooming proposal and its impacts were documented by FWP in an EA to comply with MEPA. The Montana Snowmobile Grant PEIS(1993) was reviewed to determine the issues to be addressed in the Cut Bank Snowgoers, Inc. Grant EA.

Public comments were solicited for 30 days from December 9, 1996, through January 10, 1997. Legal notices regarding the proposed action were printed in area newspapers and listed on the state's electronic bulletin board. Approximately 45 copies of the EA were mailed to FWP's standard distribution list and interested parties.

### SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

FWP received letters from 80 individuals during the comment period. The comments received were reviewed and noted. The letters contained some comments that were outside the scope of the environmental assessment process.

There were 65 letters against snowmobiling and 15 letters in favor of snowmobiling. Passion is high on both sides of this issue. A summary of the correspondence was put together by Region 4 Parks Manager Dave Todd. It is available at the Region 4 Headquarters, P.O. Box 6610, Great Falls MT 59406.

### FOREST SERVICE LAND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

FWP administers a grant program for snowmobile trail grooming. The PEIS and EA are intended to provide MEPA compliance for the snowmobile trail grooming grant program. The PEIS requires as a prerequisite for funding, that those trails on federal land be covered by appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation. The Lewis & Clark and Flathead National Forests have communicated to FWP that the use of federal lands, as proposed in the Cut Bank Snowgoers' grooming project, is in compliance with NEPA. The grooming is also in compliance with the Forest Service's current travel plans. For the scope of this EA, FWP must

depend on the determination made by the Forest Service. Limiting off road/off trail use by snowmobiles and the designation of play areas is outside the scope of the Snowmobile Grooming Grant Program PEIS.

## **WILDLIFE**

Almost every comment received on the Cut Bank Snowgoers EA, pro and con, mentioned wildlife. Unfortunately very few of the wildlife comments were specific. There were three exceptions from: (1) Lou Bruno, President, Glacier-Two Medicine Alliance; (2) Dennis Tighe, President, Island Range Chapter, Montana Wilderness Association; and (3) Mike Grayson, President, Montana Wilderness Association.

The gentlemen expressed concern about impacts on: wintering elk in three specific drainages, wintering moose, wintering mountain goats, denning grizzlies, cutthroat trout, lynx and Harlequin ducks in the general area. These three letters also mentioned Wilderness trespass and impacts on Wilderness Study Areas.

FWP is investigating these allegations. Area Warden Rod Duty (Conrad) made snowmobile patrols into the area January 4 and January 18, 1997. Area Biologist Gary Olson (Conrad) flew the area February 4, 1997. Both Rod Duty and Gary Olson ran a furbearer survey in the area February 13, 1997.

The Marias Pass area is covered with deep snow this winter. No moose or moose sign was observed in the area. The nearest elk were in the Palookaville area some distance from the trail system. The furbearer survey did pick up the tracks of two lynx but couldn't make a tie to snowmobiles. No sign of Wilderness or Wilderness Study Area trespass was observed. We will continue to check for the problems mentioned.

There were several issues related to wildlife on trails where snowmobiling is allowed by the Forest Service but is not part of the groomed trails program. We will examine these non-groomed trail issues collaboratively with the Forest Service and interest groups in the future. FWP cannot, with present authority summarily stop snowmobile activity on National Forest lands.

**DECISION:**

**FWP's analysis supports maintaining the existing Cut Bank Snowgoers' recreation program, with stipulations identified in the public awareness plan. A tradition of public recreation has developed in the Marias Pass area over many years. A state grooming grant will guarantee a continued joint commitment to resource protection and ethical public land use.**

**I am familiar with the East Front from Highway #200 to the Canadian border. Frankly, I do not know of an alternative area along the Front where we could have 3,000 days of snowmobile activity with less impact. We are, however, open to other ideas.**

**Marias Pass experiences less than ten percent of the snowmobile pressures seen around Cooke City and less than two percent of the pressure seen at West Yellowstone. Air and water problems, if measurable, will probably be observed there before we see them at Marias Pass. We will continue to look.**

**After reviewing this issue, it is my decision to accept the EA, with mitigation measures addressed in the public awareness plan, as the final EA and to award the Cut Bank Snowgoers, Inc. a grant to continue grooming the existing trails and roads designated for snowmobile use. Again it is understood that FWP will continue to respond to new and relevant resource information. Such information could change the snowmobile grooming program.**

**The Final EA may be viewed at or obtained upon request from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Region 4 Headquarters in Great Falls (406-454-5840). Contact: R4 Parks Manager Dave Todd.**



**MIKE ADERHOLD  
Region 4 Supervisor  
Great Falls, Montana**

SNOWMOBILE GROOMING PROGRAM  
MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW  
CUT BANK SNOWGOERS, INC.

-The EA document will be submitted to the Environmental Quality Council upon signing of the Decision Notice, following the 30 day comment period.

- The description of the proposed action is provided in the EA document along with maps identifying location of the groomed trails.

-The benefits of the proposed action are to provide grooming for the sport of snowmobiling, as well as snowmobile safety, education, enforcement and positive economic benefits.

-All groomed trails are located on the Flathead and Lewis and Clark National Forests. All clearances are provided and included with the EA document.

-All impacts are evaluated and mitigation identified in the Public Awareness Plan document included with the EA document. The key issues evaluated are:

1. Administration - all federal and state environmental analyses requirements are being met.

2. Air Quality - no negative impacts.

3. Topography, Soils, Hydrology - There is no grooming occurring in areas of insufficient snowcover or wet meadows. All stream crossings are done over existing structures.

4. Wildlife - Wildlife clearance has been provided. Impact to wildlife is minimal due to high elevations and deep snow pack. Ungulates move to wintering areas well away from the groomed trails prior to and after the snowmobiling season. There are no known bald eagle nesting areas in the vicinity of trails. Grizzly bear hibernation areas are in the vicinity of the Skyland/Two Medicine trails, however, the club will mitigate impacts through signing and education. There are no ungulate wintering areas in grizzly bear denning areas nor are there impacts to sensitive wildlife species. Refer to Public Awareness Plan for further information.

5. Vegetation - Most trails are on existing roads or trails with very few exceptions. The main exception is the proposed Forest Service trail reroute designed to avoid an area where snow melt run off causes an erosion problem. Refer to public Awareness Plan and EA documentation for further detail. The club will work with Ranger Districts in the war on weeds.

6. Socioeconomic - The club holds a monthly outing during the snowmobiling season. The events have about 50-80 participants and all planning and organizing is done by volunteer efforts.

7. Cultural - All groomed trails are located primarily on existing roads or trails. There are no cultural impacts.

8. Safety/Private Property - Clubs signing strategies address safety concerns, hazards, private property and other pertinent concerns and issues. Further details are provided in the EA document.

9. Wilderness Areas - A groomed trail comes near a wilderness boundary or designated non-motorized recreation area, however, the boundaries are guarded by steep terrain and a heavy timber and vegetative cover. The Two Medicine Trail head is also a cross country ski trail head and the snowmobile and cross country ski trails cross in a couple of places. The sign plan included in the EA documentation addresses the safety concerns.

10. Law Enforcement - No snowmobiling violations have been issued by the Forest Service for incursions into the wilderness.

11. Changes in Aesthetic Values - Clubs signing strategy includes "Pack-it-in Pack-it-out" signs. Litter remediation plan included with EA document.

# Analysis of reasonable alternatives include:

Alternative 1 - No change - continue grooming as in the past with no changes.

Alternative 2 - Discontinue any further grooming. Snowmobiling would continue on ungroomed trails, no signing or safety program would be provided, nor would information be provided regarding ungulate winter ranges or other sensitive issues.

Alternative 3 - Continue grooming with modifications. Additional information and education will be provided to the public to minimize all impacts as much as possible, through an enhanced signing and safety program. Trail reroute will be constructed to eliminate erosion.

### PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE: ALTERNATIVE 3

# The EA evaluates mitigation, stipulation and other control measures. Refer to the Public Awareness Plan for details.

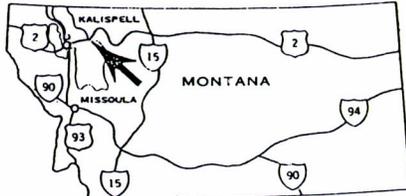
# The cover letter lists distribution of document and notice of public comment period.

# Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks contact person is:

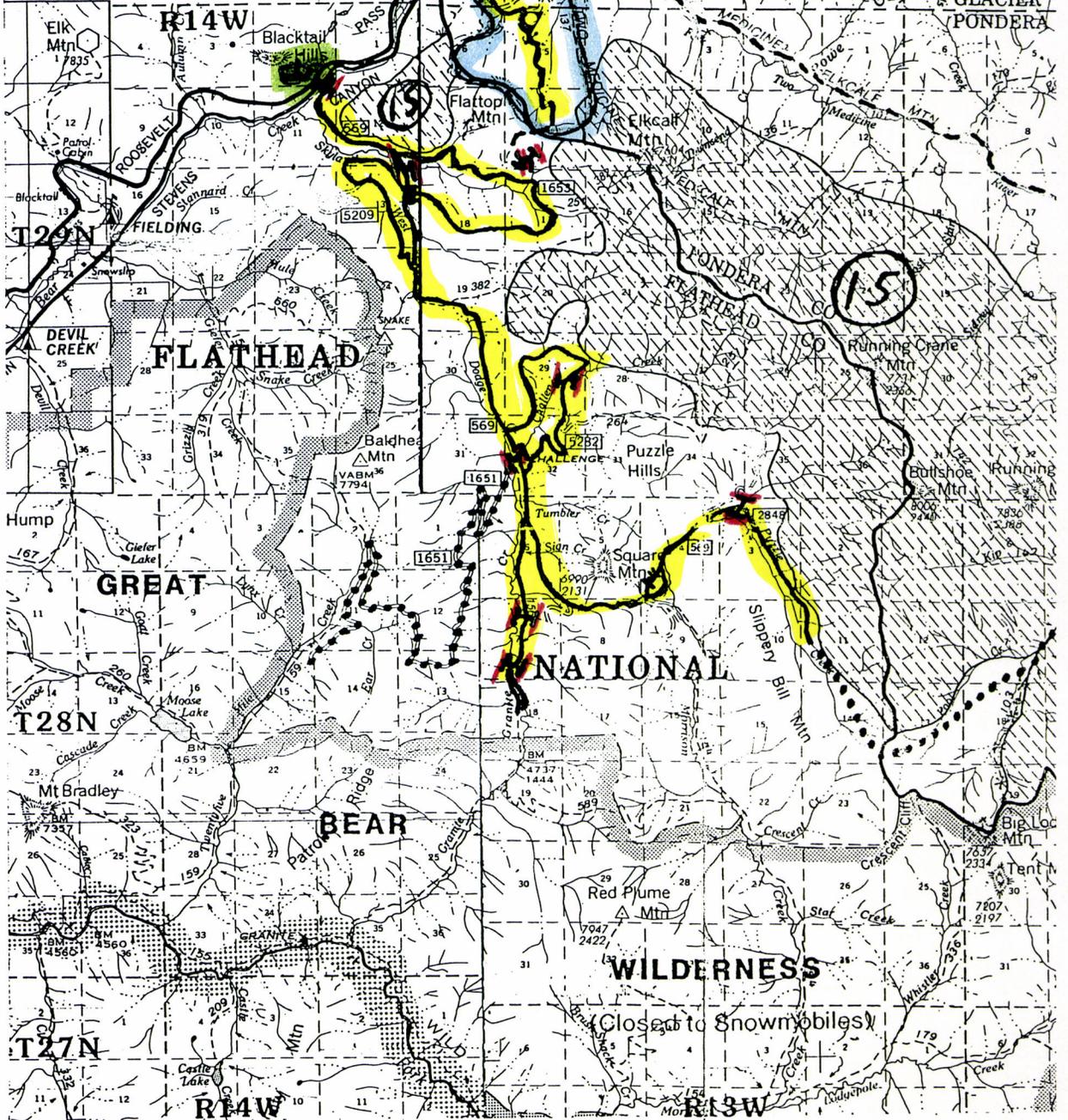
Dave Todd  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
4600 Giant Springs Rd.  
Great Falls, MT 59406  
(406) 444-3750

# This EA evaluation is the adequate level of analysis based on the findings of the Snowmobile Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

Ski Trail



Bridges /  
Crossing Structures  
Parking Areas  
Groomed Trails  
Snow Mobile



LEGEND





Montana Department of  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks

CUT BANK SNOWMOBILES INC.  
P.O. Box 1375  
CUT BANK, MT 59427

Environmental Review Criteria  
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Snowmobile Grant Program

Proposals for grants allocated under the Montana Snowmobile Grant Program shall be reviewed in accordance with the following Environmental Review Criteria. Environmental review on existing funded snowmobile trails will be completed as expeditiously as possible with the Department setting priorities and attempting to complete environmental review first for those funded trails located in the more environmentally sensitive areas. In no case will an existing trail, not in full compliance within three years, continue to be funded under the Grant Program. In some cases, proposed projects may be determined by the Department to be categorically excluded from the environmental review process.

A categorical exclusion may be denied if the Department determines that special circumstances warrant further environmental review. Such circumstances include those where use of the trail may individually, collectively or cumulatively cause significant environmental impacts. If a project satisfies number 1 below, the project qualifies for a categorical exclusion.

1. Continuation of an existing program with no on-ground changes and that has previously satisfied MEPA reviews.

Projects that do not satisfy number 1, but do satisfy numbers 2 through 7, qualify for a categorical exclusion.

2. Snowmobile trail on federal lands is already incorporated in U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management travel plan and Multi-Party Agreement has been signed.
3. Fish, Wildlife and Parks wildlife clearance has been obtained.
4. Snowmobile Project Agreement has been signed by sponsor and Department.
5. Project is on an existing roadway or previously ungroomed, but authorized by the land management agency, snowmobile trail.
6. Development or improvements on federal lands have already satisfied NEPA.
7. Trail is not in a wilderness study area or designated non-motorized area.

If the proposed project does not meet the requirements necessary for a categorical exclusion it must be reviewed in accordance with the Environmental Review Criteria identified below:

When reviewing projects within the checklist that result in a request for additional information, three subsequent requests for the same information will result in a denial of the project, or that portion of the project if it is a stand alone component.

Prior to making a final determination that a new or substantially changed application satisfies the criteria for a categorical exclusion, the Department will provide fifteen calendar days for public review and comment.



Montana Department of  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
Issue 1 Administration	Map identifying proposed trails and facilities	1	Does map clearly identify proposed activities (i.e. trails, parking lots, etc.)?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #2	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Request Submittal	
	Decision memo and env. document from land mgmnt agency	2	Do any proposed activities occur on lands managed by another agency?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #2a	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Go to #3	
		2a	Did the land mgmnt agency prepare an env. document?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #2b	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Go to #3	
		2b	Was the decision memo supplied with application?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #4	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Request Submittal	
	internal environmental review document	3	Does the proposal include operation and maintenance projects?	<input type="radio"/> Y	Go to #3b	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Go to #3a	
		3a	Does the proposal include expansion or construction of trails or facilities	<input type="radio"/> Y	Go to #3b	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Go to #4	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
		3b	Has checklist EA been prepared	Y	Go to #3c	/
				N	Request submittal	
		3c	Does the checklist EA satisfy MEPA/NEPA?	Y	Go to #3h	/
				N	Go to #3d	
		3d	Has an EA been prepared?	Y	Go to #3e	/
				N	Request EA	
		3e	Did the EA satisfy MEPA/NEPA?	Y	Go to #3h	/
				N	Go to #3f	
		3f	Has an EIS been prepared?	Y	Go to #3g	/
				N	Request EIS	
		3g	Did EIS satisfy MEPA/NEPA?	Y	Go to #3h	/
				N	Reject Proposal	
		3h	Did applicant supply decision notice?	Y	Go to #4	/
				N	Request Submittal	
	Licenses, Leases, permits, clearances, etc.	4	Has applicant supplied appropriate copies required by other agencies?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #6	
				N	Request Submittal	
Issue 2 Air Quality	Map identifying proposed trails and facilities	6	Does map clearly identify proposed activities?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #6a	
				N	Request submittal	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
		6a	Does proposal include expansion of existing or construction of new trails?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #6b	
				N	Go to #7	
	Connection to other trails or trail systems	6b	Does the expanded or new trail connect with another trail system or trail?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #7	
				N	Go to #7	
	Public awareness plan	7	Has applicant submitted a public awareness plan?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #9	
				N	Request submittal	
Issue 3 Topography, Soils, Hydrology	Map identifying proposed trail or facilities	9	Does map clearly identify proposed activities?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #9a	
				N	Request submittal	
		9a	Are there areas of known insufficient snowcover along proposed trails?	Y	Go to #9b	
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Go to #9c	
		9b	Are areas of known insufficient snowcover identified on the maps?	Y	Go to #9c	/
				N	Request submittal	
		9c	Are there areas characterized by summer wet meadows?	Y	Go to #9d	
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Go to #10	
		9d	Are areas of known wet meadows identified on the map?	Y	Go to #9e	/
				N	Request Submittal	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
		9e	Have viable alternatives around areas of known insufficient snowcover or summer wet meadows been identified?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #10	/
				N	Request Submittal	
	Avoidance	10	Has applicant submitted a plan for avoidance of areas of known insufficient snowcover or summer wet meadows?	Y	Go to #10a	<i>Not applicable see USFS letters</i>
				(N)	Request plan	
		10a	Does the plan identify specific measures for each area identified on the map?	Y	Go to #11	NA
				N	Request Specifics	
	Seasonal Restrictions	11	Does the proposal include stream crossings?	(Y)	Go to #11a	
				N	Go to #12	
		11a	Does the proposed stream crossing utilize an existing structure?	(Y)	Go to #12	
				N	Go to #11b	
		11b	Are there viable alternatives to crossing the stream that would utilize existing structures?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #12	/
				N	Go to #11c	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
		11c	Is construction of temporary crossing structures viable in the proposed crossing location?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #12	/
				N	Reject	
	Public Awareness Plan	12	Has applicant submitted a public awareness plan?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #13	
				N	Request Submittal	
Issue 4 Wildlife	Map identifying proposed activities	13	Does map clearly identify proposed activities?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #13a	
				N	Request Submittal	
		13a	Are there known ungulate wintering areas in the vicinity of proposed trails?	Y	Go to #13b	
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Go to #14	
		13b	Are there ungulate wintering areas identified on the map?	Y	Go to #13c	/
				N	Request Submittal	
		13c	Do proposed trails remain on the periphery of winter ranges?	Y	Go to #13f	/
				N	Go to # <del>13</del> 13d	
		13d	Does proposed trail pass through wintering areas?	Y	Go to #13e	/
				N	Go to #13h	
		13e	Is there a viable alternate route available for use?	Y	Go to #13f	/
				N	Reject	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
	Avoidance	13f	Is the trail length along the periphery of the wintering area the least possible?	Y	Go to #13g	/
				N	Revise Plan	
		13g	Was vegetative screening used whenever possible?	Y	Go to #13h	/
				N	Revise to utilize veg screen	
		13h	Has signing plan been proposed to keep snowmobilers from disturbing wintering ungulates?	Y	Go to #14	/
				N	Request Plan	
	Seasonal Restrictions	14	Are there ungulate wintering areas in grizzly bear habitat?	Y	Go to #14a	
				<b>N</b>	Go to #15	
		14a	Are there proposed trails near these areas?	Y	Go to #14b	/
				N	Go to #15	
		14b	Have seasonal restrictions in these areas been identified?	Y	Go to #14c	/
				n	Stipulate - Go to #14c	
		14c	Has a signing plan been proposed to mark restricted areas?	Y	Go to #15	/
				N	Stipulate - Go to #15	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
	Idle Zones	15	Are there known bald eagle nests or <u>grizzly hibernation</u> areas?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #15a	
				N	Go to #15d	
		15a	Are trails proposed near any of these sites?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #15b	
				N	Go to #15d	
		15b	Are viable alternatives identified that avoid these areas?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #15d	
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Go to #15c	
		15c	Have idle zones been proposed for these areas?	Y	Go to #15d	
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Stipulate - Go to #15d	
		15d	Has the Natural Heritage wildlife list for the proposed region been submitted (NRIS - State library)?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #15 <del>E</del>	
				N	Request Submittal	
		15e	Does the Natural Heritage list identify any rare or endangered wildlife species in the area of the proposal?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #15f	
				N	Go to #16	
		15f	Has applicant submitted an avoidance or seasonal restriction plan or other appropriate mitigative measures for these areas?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #16	
				N	Request Submittal	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
	Signing	16	Have signing strategies been proposed to identify idle zones?	Y	Go to #17	
				(N)	Stipulate - Go to #17	
	Public awareness plan	17	Has a public awareness plan been established?	(Y)	Go to #18	
				N	Stipulate - Go to #18	
	Clearance Oversight	18	Did applicant supply info and wildlife clearance with application?	(Y)	Go to #19	
				N	Request	
Issue 5 Vegetation	Maps identifying proposed trails and facilities	19	Does map clearly identify proposed activities?	(Y)	Go to #19a	
				N	Request	
		19a	Is the proposed trail/facility located entirely on an existing road or trail?	Y	Go to #20	
				(N)	Go to #19b	
		19b	Have existing roads been used whenever possible?	(Y)	Go to #19c	
				N	Stipulate - Go to 19c	
		19c	Does all or a portion of trails occur on a vegetated road or trail?	(Y)	Go to #19 <del>b</del> d	
				N	Go to #19e	
		19d	Does all or a portion of proposed activity occur on undeveloped land?	(Y)	Go to #19e	
				N	Go to #20	

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
		19e	Has the Natural Heritage vegetation list for the proposed region been submitted (NRIS - State Lib)?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #19f	
				N	Stipulate - Go to 19f	
		19f	Does the Natural Heritage list identify any rare or endangered plant species?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #19g	
				N	Go to #20	
		19g	Are any species on the list common in alpine tundra?	Y	Go to #19h	
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Go to #19j	
		19h	Do any proposed trails that are not on existing roads cross alpine tundra?	Y	Go to #19i	
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Go to #19j	
		19i	Are there alternatives to crossing the alpine tundra?	Y	Go to #19j	
				N	Reject	
		19j	Do any proposed activities involve areas of insufficient snowcover or summer wet meadows?	Y	Go to #19k	
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Go to #20	
		19k	Are there viable alternatives to avoid areas of insufficient snowcover or summer wet meadows?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #20	<i>There are none</i>
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Go to #19l	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
		19I	Has applicant submitted an avoidance or seasonal restriction plan for areas of insufficient snowcover or summer wet meadows?	Y	Go to #20	<i>not necessary since there are none</i>
				(N)	Request - Go to 20	
	Monitoring for noxious weeds	20	Are noxious weeds present within the trail area, particularly in staging areas?	(Y)	Go to #20a	
				N	Go to #21	
		20a	Has noxious weed plan been proposed in application?	(Y)	Go to #20b	
				N	Stipulate - Go to 20b	
		20b	Has a monitoring plan been proposed to survey vegetation damage and spread of noxious weeds?	(Y)	Go to #21	
				N	Stipulate - Go to #21	
	Public Awareness	21	Has a public awareness strategy been proposed?	(Y)	Go to #22	
				N	Stipulate - Go to #22	
Issue 6 Socioeconomics	Planning	22	Does the application include organized events or promotional activities that would utilize funded trails?	(Y)	Go to #22a	
				N	Go to #23	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
		22a	Does application include projected number of trail users generated by the events?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #22b	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Request - Go to #22b	
		22b	Does application include a public safety plan for the events?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #22c	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Stipulate - Go to #22c	
		22c	Has applicant identified additional employment requirements during event?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #23	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Request - Go to #23	
Issue 7 Cultural	Map identifying proposed trails and facilities	23	Has map identifying proposed trails or facilities been submitted?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #23a	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Request - Go to #23a	
		23a	Is entire proposed trail/facility located within an existing road or trail?	<input type="radio"/> Y	Go to #24	
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Go to #23b	
		23b	Does all or a portion of the proposed trail/facility occur on a historic road or trail?	<input type="radio"/> Y	Go to #23d	
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Go to #23c	
		23c	Does all or a portion of the proposed trail/facility occur on an undeveloped land?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #23d	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Go to #24	
		23d	Do viable alternative routes exist that could utilize existing roads or trails?	<input type="radio"/> Y	Stipulate - Go to #24	
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Go to #23e	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
	Site specific treatment	23e	Was SHPO consulted for determination of need for cultural resource investigation?	Y	Go to #23f	
				(N)	Stipulate - Go to #23f	
		23f	Was a cultural resource investigation conducted?	Y	Go to #23g	see USFS Letter
				(N)	Inquire as to why	
		23g	Were significant sites found?	Y	Go to #23h	
				(N)	Go to #24	
		23h	Were adequate mitigations applied (i.e. reroute, etc.)?	Y	Go to #23i	
				N	Stipulate - Go to 23i	
	Public awareness plan	23i	Is a public awareness strategy proposed?	Y	Go to #24	
				N	Stipulate - Go to #24	
Issue 8 Safety/Private Property	Maps identifying proposed trails and facilities	24	Does map clearly identify proposed activities?	(Y)	Go to #24a	
				N	Request - Go to 24a	
		24a	Does application include proposal for signing strategy identifying locations for warning signs?	(Y)	Go to #24b	
				N	Stipulate - Go to 24b	
		24b	Have private properties along proposed trails been identified?	(Y)	Go to #24c	
				N	Request - Go to #24c	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
	Avoidance	24c	Do viable alternatives exist that avoid private property?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #25	
				(N)	Go to #24d	
	Signing and public awareness	24d	Has applicant included a strategy for signing and public awareness re: private property?	Y	Go to #25	no private property near trail system
				(N)	Stipulate - Go to #25	
Issue 9 Wilderness Areas	Map identifying proposed trails and facilities	25	Do maps identify proposed trail locations?	(Y)	Go to #25a	
				N	Request - Go to #25a	
		25a	Are proposed trails located near wilderness boundary or designated non-motorized recreation area?	(Y)	Go to #25b	
				N	Go to #25e	
	Trail location strategies	25b	Is there heavy vegetative cover or topographic features between proposed trail and wilderness boundary/designated non-motorized area?	(Y)	Go to #25e	
				N	Go to #25c	
		25c	Do viable alternatives exist that would utilize vegetative screening between wilderness boundary or designated non-motorized area?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #25e	/
				N	Go to #25d	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
		25d	Do viable alternatives exist that would situate topographic features between proposed trail and wilderness area or designated non-motorized area?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #25e	✓
				N	Go to #25e	
		25e	Does proposal include trails on or adjacent to established cc ski trails?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #25f	
				N	Go to #26	
		25f	Are there viable alts. that would avoid placement of proposed trails on or adjacent to cc ski trails?	Y	Stipulate - Go to #26	
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Go to #26	
	Signing	26	Has signing program been established that would warn snowmobilers of shared use areas, wilderness boundaries, intersections, etc?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #27	
				N	Stipulate - Go to #27	
	Speed Limits	27	Does proposed trail go through residential areas or areas of particular sensitivity?	Y	Go to #27a	
				<input checked="" type="radio"/> N	Go to #28	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	√
		27a	Has applicant established appropriate speed limits or hourly restrictions in areas of sensitivity?	Y	Go to #28	/
				N	Stipulate - Go to #28	
		28	Has applicant proposed public awareness plan that includes consideration for residential and sensitive areas?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #29	
				N	Stipulate - o to #29	
Issue 8 Law Enforcement		29	Has applicant provided law enforcement report from DFW&P Region Warden Captain and/or land managing agency identifying documented snowmobile trespass on private lands and/or wilderness areas caused by adjoining or nearby funded trail and proposal for addressing such violations?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #30	
				N	Stipulate - Go to #30	
Issue 10 Changes in Aesthetic Values	Litter Remediation	30	Has applicant included a trash receptacle location, placement and management strategy?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #30a	
				N	Stipulate - Go to #30a	

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CRITERIA  
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE GRANT PROGRAM**

DISCIPLINE	APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS		REVIEW CRITERIA	Y/N (Circle 1)	REQUIRED ACTION	✓
		30a	Has applicant proposed "pack-it-in pack-it-out" type signing strategy?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #30b	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Stipulate - Go to #30b	
	Trail Location Strategies	30b	Has applicant satisfied questions 25 - 29?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Go to #31	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Go to #25	
		31	Have all appropriate boxes in right-hand column been checked?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Y	Env. considerations approved	
				<input type="radio"/> N	Take appropriate actions until all boxes are checked	



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service  
(406) 387-5243

Hungry Horse Ranger District  
PO Box 190340  
Hungry Horse, MT 59919-0340

FILE CODE: 2700

\* Date: September 24, 1996

ROUTE TO: Mike Hotchkiss

SUBJECT: Trail Systems

Dear Mr. Hotchkiss,

Here is a brief summary to your questions and I hope that I have cleared up any uncertainty. Your answers to questions 9A, 13A, 14, 15, 19H, and 20 are all correct and acceptable. The answers to questions 20A, 20B, and 23B are no. At the present time the Flathead National Forest does not have a formal noxious weed and monitoring plan. We are currently preparing to initiate an environmental analysis that will give us a formal plan for the control of noxious weeds. A public awareness strategy will also be developed as a part of the plan.

When portions of the groomed trail system leave the developed road system and cross clear cuts to connect with other roads they are considered developed lands. We do not have any historic roads to deal with.

Should you have any further questions feel free to contact me or Bob Keibler here at the office.

Sincerely,

Debbie Manley  
District Ranger



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FLATHEAD

CUT BANK SNOWGOERS INC.  
PEIS CHECKLIST AND AWARENESS PLAN 1996

ISSUE 1 ADMINISTRATION

1. The map we are using is in the process of being updated and printed for distribution in the winter of 1996 / 97.
2. All activities occur on the Flathead National Forest for the Skyland Road trails and the Lewis and Clark National forest for the Two Medicine trails. The Boundary line between the two is the Continental divide.
- 2a. Please see the Attached letters. (marked 1-2a)
4. Please see Documents. (marked 1-4)

ISSUE 2 AIR QUALITY

6a/6b. We are in the process of a small trail re-route near the area marked "6a" on the map. The purpose of this small trail adjustment is to avoid an area where melt run off is a problem in maintaining a groomed trail. This trail reroute connects to the original trail past the bad spot.  
(Please see attached MEPA / HB 495 check list marked 2-6A also attachment A-1)

7. Air quality is of importance to all who use Montanas lands and no less so to the Cut Bank Snowgoers. As the Manufactures are striding toward cleaner more efficient snowmobiles, riders are becoming more aware thru magazine articles, Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks informational programs and the likes. The Club shall use our meetings, activities and news letter to further promote the following topics.

- A. Minimized idling
- B. Minimize cold starts
- C. Benefits of proper maintenance
- D. New products and information as it is proven and becomes available to us.

We do have several advantages that help minimize our impact to the Skyland / Two Medicine area.

1. Less total traffic than more developed area
2. Cold starts are usually staggered over a wider time period due the longer travel distances to our trail heads.
3. Snowmobiles returning to the trail heads usually return in a wide spread time period also.
4. Practically no urban pollution.

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ISSUE 3 TOPOGRAPHY, SOILS, HYDROLOGY

9a thru 10.

We have no known areas of insufficient snowcover or summer wet meadows along the proposed trails. (Reference letters from Ranger Districts marked A & A-1".)

11/11a. Several stream crossings are made and all are done on existing structures ( Marked as )-( on map). In the interest of safety a temporary crossing is used near the Skyland Parking lot. This keeps the snowmobile traffic from using the edge of the highway to access Skyland road. This crossing is put up in December, removed in April and is a clear span over the creek.

12. The Skyland / Two Medicine trails use previously established USFS main access roads, log sale roads and USFS trails. All of these lead to and cross thru clear cuts and other logged areas. The terrain varies from groomed trails, moderate to challenging off trail riding. The trails are monitored weekly by the groomer and other members of the Cut Bank Snowgoers Grooming Committee. If Conditions require changes to the normal operation of the trail(s) such as insufficient snowcover due to a mild winter, the committee and groomer will under take action as required to prevent damage to the soils and vegetation. These actions might include signing, an alternative route or closure. The trail head signs, monthly club meetings, activities and news letter will be used to provide information on these topics.

ISSUE 4 WILDLIFE

13a Snowmobile impact to wildlife on the Skyland / Two Medicine trails is very minimal. This is due to the moderately high elevations and commonly deep snow pack. Ungulates in particular move to wintering areas well away from the areas being used and groomed usually before the first part of December and return late in the spring long after the April 1 end of grooming date. There are no ungulate wintering areas along the Skyland / Two Medicine trails. (Reference letters from Ranger Districts marked A & A-1".)

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14. There are no Ungulate winter areas in grizzly bear denning areas. (Reference letters from Ranger Districts marked A & A-1".)
15. There are identified grizzly hibernation areas in the vicinity of the Skyland / Two Medicine trails. (marked as 15 on the map)  
There are no known bald eagle nesting areas. (Reference letters from Ranger Districts marked A & A-1".)
- 15a/b/c. In the three places the trails appear close to the hibernation areas, the steep terrain and heavy timber cover precludes trespass from the trail or clear cut area into the hibernation area. Because of the terrain, heavy vegetative cover and being some distance outside the boundary of the hibernation area, idles zones are not proposed.
- 15d. The Grizzly Bear, West Slope Cutthroat Trout and Harlequin Duck are shown as rare or endangered wildlife for our region.
- a. The Grizzly Bear has been and is currently being addressed.
  - b. The West Slope Cutthroat Trout will not suffer any effect as all the stream crossings are on existing structures.
  - c. The Harlequin Duck will not be effected as the Skyland / Two Medicine trails do not follow or approach any Ponds, lakes, rivers or wet areas that might be used for nesting areas. The Harlequin Duck also migrates south for the winter.
- 15e. Please see Natural Heritage Wildlife list (marked 4-15d)
- 15f. The grizzly bear avoidance plan has already been in effect which created the closed to motorized use areas along the continental divide. The snowmobile trails do not affect the closed areas as explained in 15 a/b/c. Seasonal restrictions are the start of grooming no earlier than Dec 1 each year and end grooming no latter than April 1 each year. Also note The wildlife clearance forms impose no restrictions or mitigative measures.
16. As explained above in 15 a/b/c/d/e/f signing for idle zones is not required.

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17. The Cut Bank Snowgoers will use the club meetings, activities, news letter and trailhead signs to disseminate information about wildlife etiquette and lessen impact in wildlife / snowmobile encounters should they occur. Programs from the Mt. Fish Wildlife & Parks and others will be incorporated as available.

18. Please see attached Wildlife clearance forms. (marked 4-18)

ISSUE 5 VEGETATION

19a/b.

The Skyland / Two medicine trails are located mostly on existing roads or trails with very few exceptions. The main exception is the proposed trail reroute addressed in # 2-6a.

19c. Approximately half of the trails use log access roads which are re-vegetated to some degree influenced by the amount of time since their last use.

19d. Please see Trail re-route MEPA / NEPA (2-6A)

19e/f/g.

Please see Natural Heritage vegetation list (marked 5-19e)

19h None of the Skyland / Two Medicine groomed trails cross Alpine Tundra. (Reference letters from Ranger Districts marked A & A-1".)

19j There are no areas of insufficient snowcover or summer wet meadows. (Reference letters from Ranger Districts marked A & A-1".)

20. Spotted knapweed is present in the parking areas which are located immediately adjacent to U.S. Highway 2 and open to vehicle use all year long. Spotted Knapweed is presumed to exist along Skyland rd most of which is also open to vehicles year long. Canada thistle is found along the Pike creek rd and trail # 133. There is no known knapweed along trail # 133 of the Pike creek rd. (Reference letters from Ranger Districts marked A & A-1".)

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20a/b

All of the Skyland trail system and parking area are located on the Flathead National Forest in the Hungry Horse Ranger district. The Flathead National Forest does not have a noxious weed plan, monitoring plan or public awareness plan at this time. Steps are being initiated to prepare such plans.

The Lewis and Clark National Forest also does not have a noxious weed plan, monitoring plan or public awareness plan but does have a forest wide Environmental Impact Statement to treat noxious weeds. All known infestations in the Pike creek and Two Medicine trail (#133) areas are being chemically treated and are recorded. (Reference letters from Ranger Districts marked A & A-1".)

21. The Cut Bank Snowgoers will work with both Ranger districts in the war on weeds as they deem appropriate. (Reference letters from Ranger Districts marked A & A-1".)

ISSUE 6 SOCIOECONOMICS

22. The Cut Bank Snowgoers hold a monthly outing from December thru April of each year on either a saturday or sunday. All outings except the year end steak fry are open to members, guest and other trail users. An outing consist of a small group of club members volunteering to prepare a meal to be served from the club cookout sled, on the trail, on a date and location of their choosing. These dates are set at the fall kick off banquet and are changed only if severe weather indicates the need to do so. The club pays for the main course supplies, hot coca and coffee; other participates are encouraged / welcome to bring pot luck side dishes or dessert items. This has been a long standing tradition of the Snowgoers to promote snowmobiling, the area and the club as a family activity. Many of good relationships with Forest Service, Fish Wildlife & Parks personal and other snowmobilers have been sealed with a cup of coffee and a bowl of stew at a club outing somewhere on the trails in the past.

Usually one outing is coupled with a poker ride or fun run and a fun day has been held in the recent past with a day of non head to head and non speed related events are participated in by young and old alike. The Fun day is usually held on private property near Snowslip to provide the best and

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safest location for such doings. Any fees charged for a poker ride or the fun day are just to cover the cost of promotion and supplies of the event itself.

- 22a. The number of trail users generated by the above club events is between fifty (50) and eighty (80). The event does not really "generate" that many users as most of the participants would be on the trail system anyway!
- 22b. Please see Safety Plan. (marked 6-22b)
- 22c. As all of our club outings, poker rides and fun days are by volunteer, there are no additional employment requirements. Our Groomer is a private contractor as provide in the project agreement.

ISSUE 7 CULTURAL

- 23a. Will the Skyland / Two Medicine trails are not entirely on existing road or trails nearly all occur on developed land as referenced in letter from Hungry Horse Ranger District. The trail re-route addressed in # 2-6a is the reason for a NO answer to this question. Also no historic roads or trails are involved. (Reference letters from Ranger Districts marked A & A-1".)
- 23b. None of the Skyland / Two Medicine trails occur on a historic road of trail. (Reference letters from Ranger Districts marked A & A-1".)
- 23c. See Trail re-route project addressed in 2-6a & 6b.
- 23d. The alternatives to the trail re-route are addressed in # 2-6a
- 23e. The Lewis and Clark Rocky Mtn district wstill consult SHPO as noted in MEPA/NEPA checklist in step 2-6a for the trail re-route. Neither Ranger district felt it was necessary for a consultation on the other current existing trails. (Reference letters from Ranger Districts marked A & A-1".)

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23f/g/h. PENDING!  
Action may not be required.

23i. A Public Awareness will be developed if necessary.

ISSUE 8 SAFETY/PRIVATE PROPERTY

24A. Please see sign plan (marked 8-24a)

24b/c. There are no private properties along the Skyland /  
Two Medicine trails.

24d. No signing and awareness strategy is needed as no  
private property exists along the Skyland / Two  
Medicine trails.

ISSUE 9 Wilderness .

25a/b. There are couple of places where a groomed trail  
come "NEAR" a wilderness boundary or designated non  
motorized recreation area.

1. In the case of the wilderness boundary the groomed  
trails lead into clear cut areas and are at least  
one half mile from the boundaries. From the edge  
of the clear cut the boundaries are guarded by
  - A: steep terrain
  - B: heavy timber / vegetative cover
  - C: a combination of both A & B.

As evident by the law enforcement reports  
(marked 8-29 ) the observed tracks entering  
wilderness areas have occurred more than two miles  
from the nearest groomed trail and would probably  
occur even without the groomed trails. The  
conclusion can be drawn that the wilderness  
boundaries are adequately protected by the terrain  
and vegetative cover from the Skyland trails which  
pose no threat to the wilderness areas.

2. In the case of the non-motorized areas "NEAR" the  
groomed trails, most of these trail sections are  
into or thru clear cut areas and the boundaries are  
guarded by the combination of terrain and heavy  
vegetative cover. Again this is proven out by the  
Biologist report. (marked 4-18)

25e/f. The Two Medicine trail head is also a cross country  
ski trail trail head. The two trails cross each  
other only in a couple of places and has a short  
shared use access from the parking area. The ski  
trail is not groomed and skiers are occasionally  
encountered on the groomed snowmobile trail. This  
has not been a problem but the area does need some  
additional signing. The two trails exist in the

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same area but are separated by some distance and timber covered terrain in nearly all places. Better signing will be a goal of the Cut Bank Snowmobile club this winter and we will work with the Rocky Mountain Front Ranger District to help in renewing trail markers on the ski trail if requested.

26. Please see Sign Plan (marked 8-24)
27. The Skyland / Two Medicine trails are out side of all sensitive area boundaries and there are no residential areas.
28. One of the principle awareness steps in regards to the cross country ski trail will be better signing. Other programs and information can be presented thru club meetings, news letters and trail head signs with concern to wilderness, non motorized areas and shared use area etiquette. We do not have any residential areas to contend with.
29. Law enforcement reports from both USFS districts attached. (marked 8-29)

ISSUE 10 CHANGES IN AESTHETIC VALUES

30 & 30a.

The Cut Bank Snowgoers Litter Remediation strategy has several prongs.

- A. PACK-IT-IN PACK-IT-OUT
- B. Portable contained outhouse on trail
- C. Litter disposal receptacle at outings
- D. Adopt a Highway clean up participants along highway 2 near our parking area



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Rocky Mountain RD

P.O. Box 340  
Choteau, MT 59422  
406 466-5341  
FAX 406 466-2237

File Code: 2300

Date: Oct. 10, 1996

Cut Bank Snowgoers  
Attention: Mike Hotchkiss  
P.O. Box 301  
Cut Bank, MT 59427

I am writing in response to your letter requesting more information and clarification to complete your snowmobile grant program PEIS. I will only be addressing the portions of your grant request that are on the Rocky Mountain Ranger District of the Lewis & Clark National Forest. The Flathead National Forest will have to address the portion on their Forest. I will address each of the areas by the number you referenced in your letter.

- #6a As you mentioned, a small portion of trail #133, the Summit Cutoff trail is scheduled to be reconstructed. The reason for this reconstruction is not entirely tied to snowmobile use or the grant request. This piece of trail is being reconstructed to correct an erosion problem that exists on an approximately 100 yard piece of existing trail. Your club is cooperating with us in constructing the new portion and we will be rehabilitating the old eroding portion.
- #9a I agree with your response of no, stating that there are no areas of insufficient snow cover on any of the trails under your grant proposal. The trails covered in this proposal also do not cross any summer wet meadows.
- #13a Neither of the two trails in your grant proposal cross ungulate wintering areas (per Rocky Mountain Ranger District files).
- #14 The entire area of your grant proposal is grizzly bear habitat, but the two trails do not go through ungulate wintering areas.
- #15 There are no known bald eagle nests in the area. As stated previously, the entire area is suitable grizzly bear habitat, but neither of the groomed trails in your grant proposal cross either denning or spring grizzly bear habitat (per Rocky Mountain Ranger District files).
- #19h You are correct, neither of the two trails cross alpine tundra.
- #20 Spotted knapweed is located near the parking area at the Summit and Canada thistle is found along the Pike Creek road and trail #133. There is no known knapweed along trail #133 or the Pike creek road.
- #20a You asked for a copy of our noxious weed program. I am not sure what it is that you would like. We have a Forest wide Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to treat noxious weeds across the entire Forest. This EIS addresses the site types and the types of treatment that will be used in what area. All of the infested areas within your grant proposal area are currently



A-1  
LEWIS & CLARK

being treated chemically. All of the known sites are also recorded on an atlas and a data base at the Rocky Mountain Ranger District. If you would like copies of the atlas or the EIS, please let either Brad McBratney or me know.

- #20b We continually make ocular estimates of the known infested areas and update our atlas and data base to accurately report the level of infestation across the District. We also add any new infestations to the atlas and data base. Some reports of new infestations come from private individuals and some come our own employees working in the area. We encourage all users of the area to report noxious weeds they find on the National Forest.
- #23b There are no known conflicts with the two trails proposed under your grant request with historic roads or trails. Neither trail #133 or the Pike creek road are designated an historic road or trail. However, trail #133 is old enough to be designated an historic trail.
- #23e Since the Forest Service is not proposing new activities concerning these two snowmobile trails, we have not consulted with SHPO. If consultation is needed, either the Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks or your club would need to request consultation with SHPO.
- #25a Both of the trails under your grant proposal are several miles from existing wilderness areas. The groomed portion of the Pike creek road comes within approximately 1 mile of an area restricted from October 15 until April 15 to snowmobiles.
- #25e There are cross country ski trails that cross the Pike creek road. I agree that both the snowmobile trail and the cross country ski trail should be marked to warn of the other use crossing the trail. To my knowledge, there have not been conflicts between snowmobilers and cross country skiers.
- #29 To my knowledge, there have been no snowmobile trespasses on private land or wilderness as a result of State funded groomed trails on the Rocky Mountain Ranger District.

I hope that this is the information that you needed to complete your snowmobile grant program PEIS. If you need additional information feel free to contact either Brad McBratney or me.

*Bradley S. McBratney*

JERRY DOMBROVSKE  
District Ranger





United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service  
(406) 387-5243

*Copy*  
Hungry Horse Ranger District  
PO Box 190340  
Hungry Horse, MT 59919-0340

File Code: 2350

Date: Jan. 18, 1996

Mr. Mike Hotchkiss  
Grooming Chairman  
Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Box 301  
CutBank, MT 59427

Dear Mr. Hotchkiss,

You asked me to review the National Environmental Policy Act documentation for the Skyland Snowmobile Trail System on the Hungry Horse District, Flathead National Forest. The Flathead National Forest Land and Resources Management Plan directed us to "Continue the Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Montana to provide grooming and maintenance of snowmobile trails (FNF LRMP Pg. II-16). At the time the Record of Decision for the Forest Plan was signed on 1/22/80, the Skyland Snowmobile Trail System was in existence and covered by a Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Montana. Furthermore, on 1/1/87 a decision was signed implementing the Flathead National Forest Travel Plan. The Travel Plan recognized the roads and play areas utilized by the Skyland Snowmobile Trail System as being open to snowmobile use.

In my opinion the documentation cited above is adequate to meet the National Environmental Policy Act requirements to allow continued grooming and use of the existing trails and play areas that form the Skyland Snowmobile Trail System.

Sincerely,

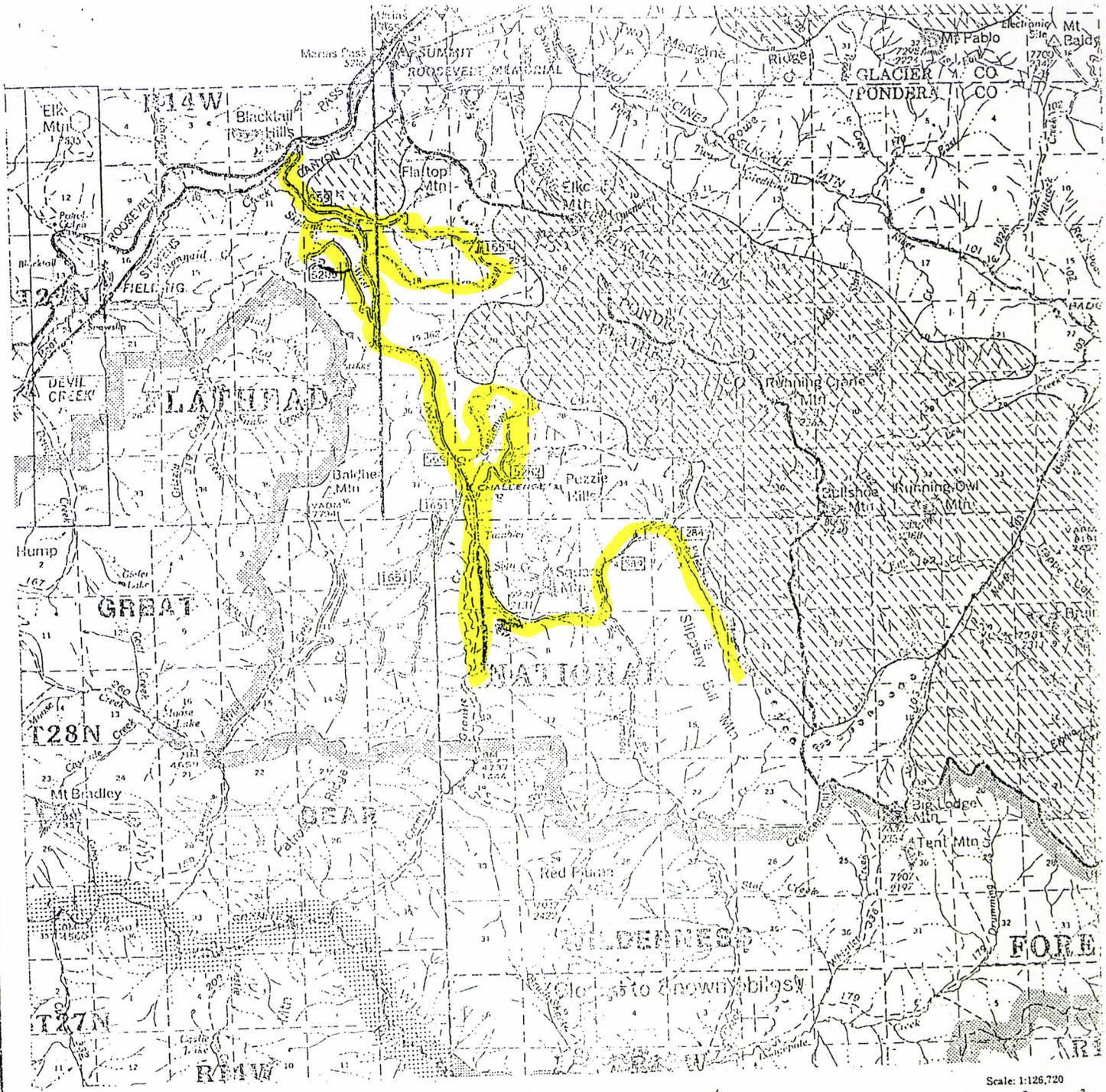
*Allen L. Christopher*  
ALLEN L CHRISTOPHERSEN  
District Ranger

1-2A

FLATHEAD

*club copy*

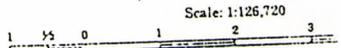




LEGEND

- National Forest Boundary
- Adjacent National Forest Boundary
- County Boundary
- Game Management Area Boundary
- Wilderness Boundary
- Special Area Boundary
- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- Forest Route
- Primary Highway
- Secondary Highway
- Primary Access Route - Normally Suitable for Automobile Travel - Travel with Caution
- Improved Road
- Primitive Road
- Road or Trail with Restrictions - Inquire at Local Forest Service Station
- Trail
- National Recreation Trail

GROOMED TRAILS  
IN FLATHEAD NATIONAL  
FOREST FOR WHICH  
EXCLUSION IS BEING  
APPLIED FOR.



**TRAIL INFORM**

- Trailhead
- Groomed, Safest
- Ungroomed, Caution Advised
- Ungroomed, Seasoned Rider
- Area Closed To Snowmobiles
- Trail Closed Yearlong To Snow

CUT BANK SNOGGERS  
P.O. BOX 301  
CUT BANK, MT 59427



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Rocky Mountain RD

P.O. Box 340  
Choteau, MT 59422  
406 466-5341  
FAX 406 466-2237

File Code: 2310

Date: March 25, 1996

Mike Hotchkiss  
Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
P.O. Box 301  
Cut Bank, MT 59427

I am writing in response to your request for our assistance in your application for a Categorical Exclusion from detailed analysis under the Montana Snowmobile Grant Program. I will respond individually to items two and five though seven of the Environmental Review Criteria, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Snowmobile Grant Program, as it pertains to the Rocky Mountain Ranger District. I can not address items one, three or four, as they do not pertain to the Rocky Mountain Ranger District, nor can I respond to your use of the Flathead National Forest.

2) "Snowmobile trail on federal lands is already incorporated in U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management travel plan and Multi-party Agreement has been signed." The Lewis & Clark National forest completed an Environmental Assessment, Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact in 1987 for the Forest Travel Plan. The use of snowmobiles on Forest roads, trails, and general Forest areas in the Badger/Two-Medicine area is in accordance with this analysis and subsequent travel plan.

A Multi-party agreement exists between the Cut Bank Snowgoers, the Lewis & Clark National Forest, the Flathead National Forest and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. It is an annual agreement that rolls over every year unless one of the parties notifies the other parties by May 15th that they wish to terminate the agreement.

5) "Project is on existing roadway or previously ungraded, but authorized by the land management agency, snowmobile trail." The project that the Cut Bank Snowgoers are applying for the Categorical Exclusion on the Rocky Mountain Ranger District consists of existing roads and trails that have been groomed in previous years under a grant for grooming trails from the Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks.

6) "Development or improvements on federal lands have already satisfied NEPA." The existing improvements and developments covered under the above mentioned agreement have been covered under appropriate NEPA analysis where such analysis has been necessary. Any significant future changes to the Groomed Trail System, parking lots, or other improvements will be considered through an appropriate NEPA analysis and decision document at that time.

7) Trail is not in a wilderness study area or designated non-motorized area." The area covered under the current agreement is not currently a wilderness study area or designated non-motorized area. If new legislation should change the status of this area, the Forest Service would then determine if the existing use was compatible with the management direction outlined in that legislation.

1-2A

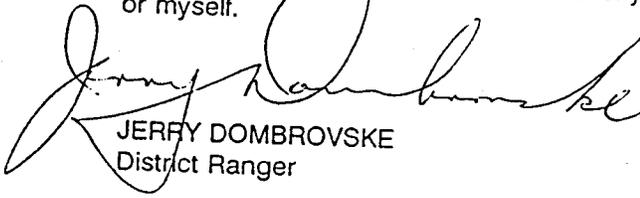
Lewis & Clark

EL: EUP  
3-26-96

CLB  
COPY.

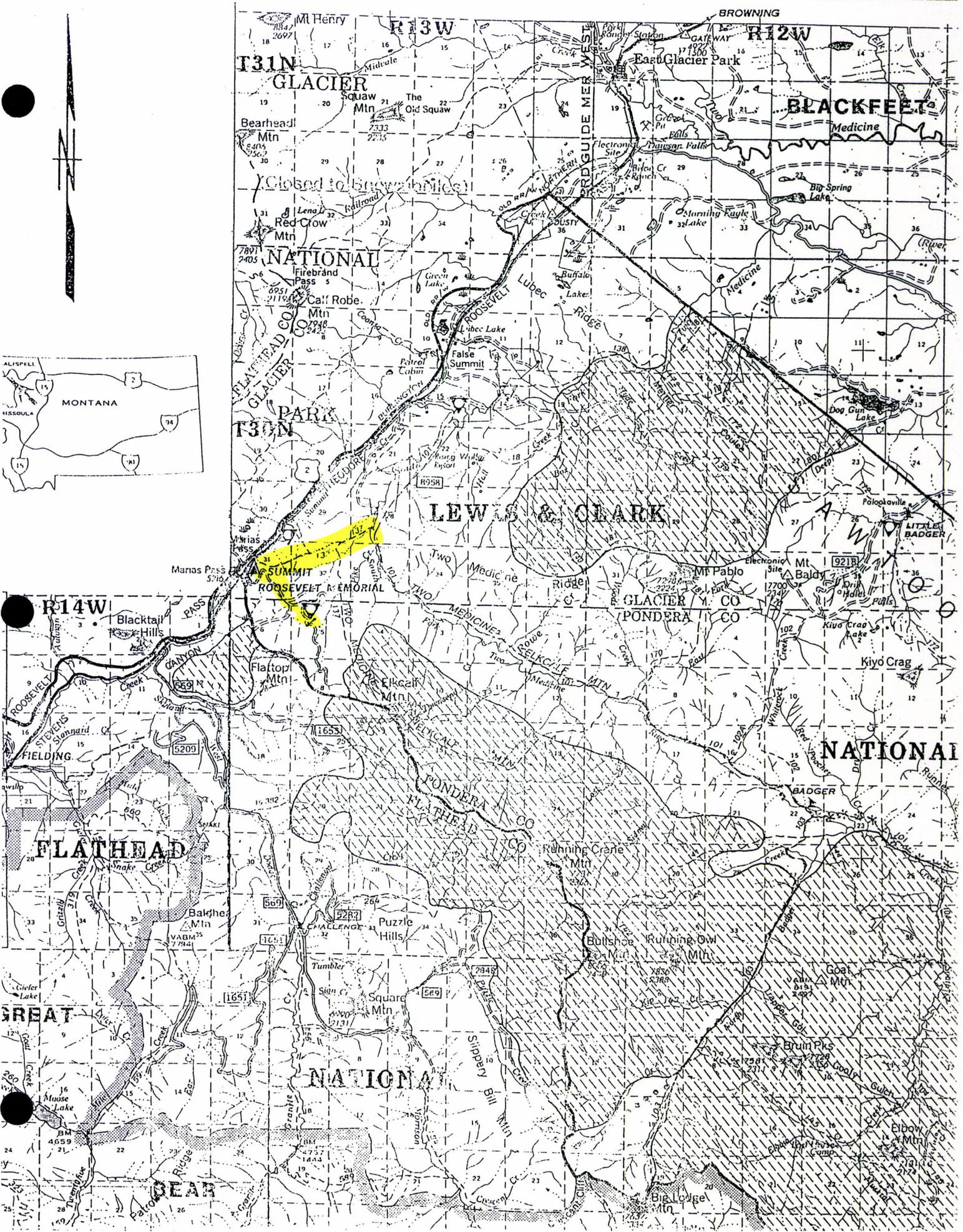
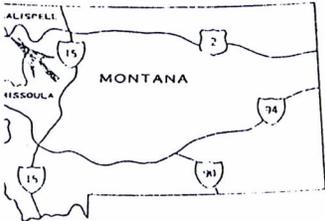


I hope that I have adequately responded to your request for information from Brad McBratney, pertaining to your request for a Categorical Exclusion from the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks for your use of the Badger/Two-Medicine area. If I have not or you need additional information, feel free to contact either Brad or myself.



JERRY DOMBROVSKE  
District Ranger





GLACIER NATIONAL MONUMENT  
BLACKFEET

NATIONAL MONUMENT  
ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL

LEWIS & CLARK

FLATHEAD

GREAT

NATIONAL

NATIONAL

PATROON

Big Lodge Mtn

DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATING AGREEMENT

Between

CUTBANK SNOWGOERS

and

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

and

FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST - USDA FOREST SERVICE

and

LEWIS & CLARK NATIONAL FOREST - USDA FOREST SERVICE

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered into by and between the Cutbank Snowgoers Club, a non-profit corporation in the State of Montana, hereinafter referred to as the CLUB, and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, State of Montana, hereinafter referred as the DEPARTMENT, and the Flathead and Lewis and Clark National Forests, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, hereinafter referred to as the FOREST SERVICE, under the provisions of Montana, Code 23, Chapter 2, and the Acts of June 30, 1914, (16 USC 498) and June 12, 1960, (16 USC 530). The three parties of this agreement will be hereafter referred to as COOPERATORS.

WHEREAS, the FOREST SERVICE is responsible for the National Forest's recreation resources and their being available for public use and enjoyment, and

WHEREAS, managed and maintained snowmobile trails in the vicinity of Skyland Road on the Hungry Horse District and in the vicinity of Marias Pass and the South Fork/Two Medicine drainage on the Rocky Mountain Ranger District, need to be groomed to provide snowmobilers with a safer and more enjoyable recreation experience, and

WHEREAS, the CLUB is interested in assisting in the maintenance and operation of snowmobile facilities and activities on the land administered by the Forest Service, for use by CLUB members as well as the general public, and

WHEREAS, the DEPARTMENT controls State funds earmarked for the development and maintenance of snowmobile trails and desires to cooperate with the FOREST SERVICE and the CLUB in the development and maintenance of snowmobile facilities on the land administered by the Forest Service and

WHEREAS, the general public will benefit from the three parties cooperating in the providing for these recreation facilities,

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the above premises, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1-4

A. THE CLUB SHALL:

1. Develop and present to the DEPARTMENT and FOREST SERVICE for approval by June 15 annually an operating plan showing grooming routes, schedules, signing and current club officers.
2. Erect at the trailhead certain signs as shown in the annual operating plan and store these signs in the off season. Signs shall meet the specifications shown in FSH 7109.11 (Chap. 52.34) Sign Handbook.
3. Erect at strategic points along the snowmobile trails certain signs showing trail locations and lengths; and shall erect at the parking areas or trailhead a sign which states that the project is funded by State gasoline tax refunds and snowmobile registration decal fees and lists the cooperators. Signs approved by the Department will be purchased by the Department and installed by the Club.
4. Perform such trail maintenance and marking as may be necessary to keep the trails usable. Inspection of the trails for usability should be performed periodically by the DEPARTMENT. See the USDA FSH No. 2309.18 Trail Handbook for guidelines.
5. Provide trail grooming once a week, more or less, depending upon the suitability of snow conditions for snowmobiling and availability of funds in their snowmobile trail grooming budget. The CLUB shall bill the DEPARTMENT at the end of each grooming month for costs of grooming. The CLUB may request an advance of funds by writing the DEPARTMENT at least two (2) weeks prior to need for funds. The total bill to the DEPARTMENT shall not exceed the annual grant amount for any snow season. The billings shall itemize all expenses billed to the DEPARTMENT and include documentation as required by the DEPARTMENT.
6. Meet annually or more often with the other parties to this Agreement to coordinate activities pursuant to this Agreement.

B. THE FOREST SERVICE SHALL:

1. Allow National Forest System lands as shown on the Annual Operating Plan Map to be used as designated snowmobile routes.
2. Allow the CLUB, upon review and approval by the FOREST SERVICE and the DEPARTMENT of detailed annual operating plans, to improve trails by machine grading, cutting brush and small timber, minor bridge construction and other improvements as may be necessary.
3. Meet annually or more often with other parties to this Agreement for the purpose of coordinating activities undertaken pursuant to this agreement.
4. As funds permit furnish signs of informational and directional nature for installation by the CLUB that are identified in the annual operating plan.

## C. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

1. Reimburse the CLUB for the costs it incurs for grooming trails not to exceed the annual amount per snow season. Costs shall be based upon rates established through negotiation with local contractors by the CLUB. The DEPARTMENT will have no liability for charges in excess of the annual grant amount per snow season, unless, within the sole discretion of the DEPARTMENT, it is determined that sufficient additional funds exist in the Snowmobile Trail Grooming Account. If funds are available in that account, grooming costs may be reimbursed after the maximum charge of the annual grant amount has been incurred by the CLUB, provided, however, that such reimbursement shall be at the sole discretion of the DEPARTMENT.
2. Monitor the CLUB for compliance with safety and performance guidelines, periodically making a compliance report to the FOREST SERVICE.
3. Meet annually or more often with the other parties to this Agreement for the purpose of coordinating activities undertaken pursuant to this Agreement.
4. Maintain and enforce guidelines of grooming according to USDA FSH 2309.18 Trails Handbook and appropriate DEPARTMENT guidelines.
5. An annual operating plan will be presented to the FOREST SERVICE by the DEPARTMENT for its approval prior to July 1 of each year.
6. Signs will be purchased by the DEPARTMENT for installation by the CLUB as outlined in the annual operating plan.

## D. IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED THAT:

1. Any proposed development or betterment projects will be jointly agreed to by the COOPERATORS prior to their initiation.
2. Nothing herein shall be construed as obligating the FOREST SERVICE to expend, or as involving the United States in any obligation for future payment of money, in excess of appropriations authorized by law.
3. No contributions herein provided for shall entitle the CLUB or the DEPARTMENT to any share or interest in the said facilities other than the right to use the same under the regulations of the FOREST SERVICE. All improvements shall be and remain the property of the United States.
4. Permission to perform work on National Forest Lands under the terms of this Agreement do not in any way convey to the CLUB or the DEPARTMENT, their officials, or any person or persons working with the FOREST SERVICE in the performance of said work, employee status that would extend to them the benefits of the FEDERAL EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION ACT, as amended.
5. The snowmobile trails and facilities will be open to the general public. The CLUB and the DEPARTMENT will in no way control access to or use of the trails or improvements.

6. No member of, or delegate to, Congress or Resident Commissioner shall be admitted to any share or part of this Agreement, or to any benefit that may arise therefrom; but this provision shall not be construed to extend to this Agreement if made with a corporation for its general benefit.

7. COOPERATORS will comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) and in accordance with Title VI of that Act, no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, handicap, or national origin, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the COOPERATORS receive Federal financial assistance and will immediately take any measures necessary to effectuate this Agreement.

8. This Agreement may be revised as necessary, by mutual consent of all parties, by the issuance of a written amendment, signed and dated by all parties.

9. The term of this Agreement shall run from the dates signed by the respective parties until June 1, 1988, and thereafter from year to year (June 1 of each year through May 31 of each succeeding year) unless any party notifies the other two parties of its intention to terminate this Agreement, in writing on or before the 15th day of May in the year in which expiration of this Agreement is desired.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the last date written below.

FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

BY Elyon B. Brannon

BY [Signature]

TITLE For Sup.

TITLE Reg. Sup.

DATE 4/5/88

DATE 3/29/88

LEWIS & CLARK NATIONAL FOREST

CUTBANK SNOWGOERS CLUB

BY [Signature]

BY Bob Pelt

TITLE For Sup.

TITLE President.

DATE 3/3/88

DATE 3/18/88



- Ranger District Boundary
- Wilderness Boundary
- National Forest Land
- Other Land
- ▨ Wild & Scenic River Corridor
- ▲ River Access
- Dirt Road
- Trail
- Horizontal Control Station
- ▲ Forest Recreation Site
- Ⓜ Stock Facilities

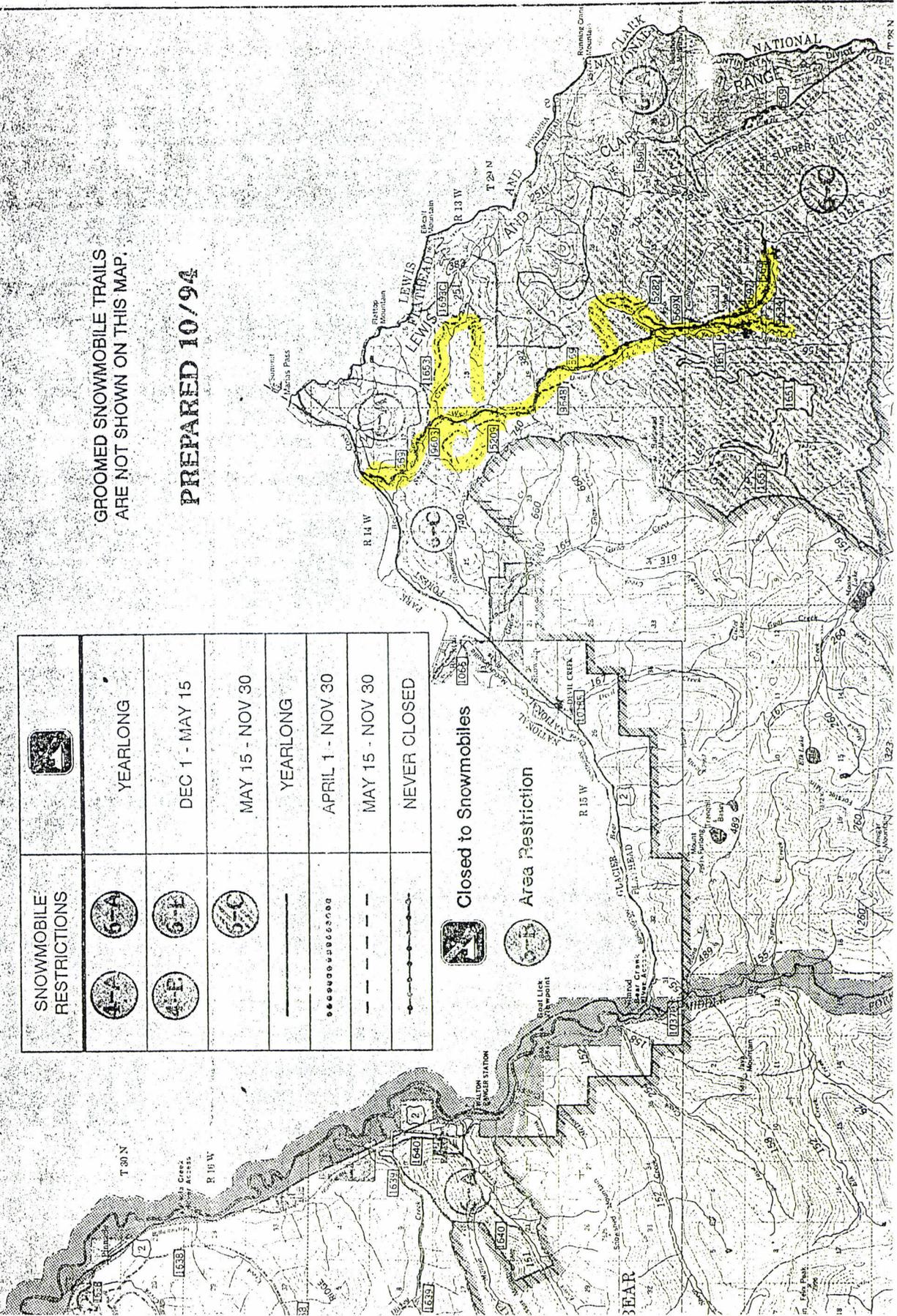
# SNOWMOBILE

## ACCESS INFORMATION MAP

SNOWMOBILE RESTRICTIONS		
	YEARLONG	YEARLONG
	DEC 1 - MAY 15	MAY 15 - NOV 30
	YEARLONG	YEARLONG
	APRIL 1 - NOV 30	MAY 15 - NOV 30
	NEVER CLOSED	NEVER CLOSED

GROOMED SNOWMOBILE TRAILS ARE NOT SHOWN ON THIS MAP.

PREPARED 10/94



Closed to Snowmobiles

Area Restriction

Snowmobile Project Agreement

SNOWMOBILE PROJECT AGREEMENT

THIS PROPOSAL requests an agreement be established between the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, an agency of the State of Montana, hereinafter called "Department," and (club name)  
CUT BANK SNOWMOBILES INC hereinafter called "the Club."

WITNESSETH:

RECITALS

1. Montana statutes earmark a portion of gasoline taxes and snowmobile registration decal fees for snowmobile facility operation, maintenance and development for public use at no cost to the public.
2. Sufficient funds have accrued in the snowmobile earmarked revenue account to fund this proposal.
3. The Parks Division, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, is responsible for the administration of this program.
4. The Parks Division desires to seek means of funding snowmobile facilities maintenance projects, and to seek baseline information for snowmobile operations projects.
5. The Club is an entity in the immediate vicinity of the trails to be maintained and is desirous of seeing trails maintained for snowmobilers.
6. Both parties hereto desire to maintain trails for snowmobile use on land shown on a map submitted as a supplement to this application, designated Attachment "B", and
7. As demonstrated by the attached written statements, the landowner(s) of affected property(ies) has/have granted permission to the Club to carry out the proposal on affected property.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises, conditions, and terms hereinafter set forth, the Club proposes:

1. That Attachment "B" is an accurate depiction of the areas covered by this proposal.
2. That the Club will perform the following activities and duties:
  - A. Utilize dollars granted for the purpose of maintaining snowmobile trails detailed in Attachment "B". This

1-4

maintenance shall be conducted as conditions required during the agreement period.

- B. Permit inspection of the project by the Department or its employees or agents at any and all reasonable times during the term of the agreement.
  - C. Indemnify and save harmless the State and the Department from all claims from injuries or damages arising or growing out of the operations performed under any resulting agreement.
  - D. Will not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, political ideas, sex, age, or marital status, physical or mental disability, or national origin in the use of any property or facility maintained pursuant to any resulting agreement.
  - E. Fully comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations, etc. It shall be the Club's responsibility to familiarize itself with the relevant laws, rules, regulations, etc.
  - F. Require that in all subcontracts let in fulfilling any resulting agreement, preference must be given to the employment of bona fide Montana residents at the prevailing rate of wages applicable to the county or locality in which the work is being performed (section 16-2-401, et. seq., MCA).
  - G. Provide the Department with documentation of actual and necessary expenses incurred in trail maintenance in the form and upon the dates requested; all such documentation will be submitted by May 1 of the contract period. The Club agrees to allow and permit legislative or department auditors access to its records for the purpose of determining that this grant is administered in accordance with grant terms and conditions as set forth in any resulting agreement.
4. Agrees that any contract resulting from this proposal shall be with the Club, as an independent contractor and does not establish an employer-employee relationship between the Department and the Club or any person employed by the Club for any purpose. In this regard, the Club agrees:
- A. To pay all required state, federal or local taxes, fees, including unemployment insurance and workers' compensation insurance or other assessments related to employment of any person or individual employed by the Club as necessary in fulfillment of this contract.

E. To abide by the State Prevailing Wage Rate - Section 18-2-406 MCA, which provides that contractors, sub-contractors and employees who are performing services under public works contracts as provided in Part 4, MCA shall post in a prominent and accessible site on the project or work area, not later than the first day of work, a legible statement of all wages to be paid to the employees on such site or work area.

5. Agrees that the Department may unilaterally terminate any contract resulting from this proposal upon refusal by the Club to allow access to records necessary to carry out the legislative audit and analysis function set forth in Title V, Chapters 12 and 13, MCA.
6. Agrees that venue will be in Lewis and Clark County should any legal action arise from this proposal or any contract issued in whole or in part therefrom.
7. Agrees that it is understood that a failure to comply with any of the provisions listed above can result in a rejection of this proposal and/or the voiding of any resulting contract.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the promises, conditions, and terms hereinafter set forth, the parties agree as follows:

1. The period covered by this agreement will begin July 1, (current year) and will continue in effect until June 30, (following year).
2. This agreement may be revised as necessary, by mutual consent of all parties by issuance of a written amendment, signed and dated by all parties.
3. The rights and obligations of any part to this agreement may be terminated upon giving thirty (30) days notice by the party.
4. The agreement accepts the Snowmobile Project Proposal/Application and becomes part of the agreement.

BY: CLUB

Donald H. Jochem \_\_\_\_\_ Date  
President  
Sharon Hotchkiss \_\_\_\_\_ Date  
Secretary

BY: DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

Mike Odehoda \_\_\_\_\_ Date  
Regional Supervisor

rev. 3-91  
snomo\proj.agt

rev. 3-91

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action  
X Re-route of trail around an erosion problem in the existing trail and will rejoin existing trail. Most of new trail will utilize natural open area with a short section that will require removal of small trees apx 12 feet wide by 300 feet long. The old section of trail will be water barred and closed.

2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action  
District Ranger  
Rocky Mtn. Ranger District  
Lewis & Clark National Forrest

3. Name of Project  
X Summit Area Snowmobile Trail

4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)  
X Lewis & Clark Forest Service  
Rocky Mountain Ranger District  
1102 N. Main Ave.  
Choteau, Mt. 59422  
  
X Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
P.O. Box 301  
Cut Bank, Mt. 59427

2-6A

5. If Applicable:  
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date \$ 2780  
Estimated Completion Date Jan 97  
Current Status of Project Design (% complete) 100 %

6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)  
Glacier County, T30N, R13W, SEC 28, SW 1/4  
(see attached map)

7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

- (a) Developed:  
residential . . . . . 0 acres  
industrial . . . . . 0 acres
- (b) Open Space / Woodlands  
/ Recreation . . . . . 1/4 acres
- (c) Wetlands/Riparian  
Areas . . . . . 0 acres
- (d) Floodplain . . . . . 0 acres

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

(e) Productive:

irrigated cropland .....	0	acres
dry cropland. . . . .	0	acres
forestry . . . . .	0	acres
rangeland . . . . .	0	acres
other . . . . .	0	acres

8. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

X See attached map

9. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.

X See attached narrative summary.

10. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
-------------	--------	--------------

X NONE

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
-------------	----------------

Lewis & Clark National Forrest Service	\$ 2780.00
--	------------

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
-------------	------------------------

X NONE

11. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:

A. Project fits in categorical Exclusion Category

~~B. Proposed work will be sent to State Historic Preservation office~~

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES

Will the proposed action result in:

IMPACT

Can Impact Be Mitigated

Comment Index

Unknown

None

Minor

Potentially Significant

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

(e) Productive:

irrigated cropland .....	0	acres
dry cropland. . . . .	0	acres
forestry . . . . .	0	acres
rangeland . . . . .	0	acres
other . . . . .	0	acres

8. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

X See attached map

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(a) Permits:

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
-------------	--------	--------------

X NONE

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
-------------	----------------

Lewis & Clark National Forrest Service	\$ 2780.00
--	------------

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
-------------	------------------------

X NONE

11. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:

- A. Project fits in categorical Exclusion Category
- ~~B. Proposed work will be sent to State Historic Preservation office~~

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES

Will the proposed action result in:

IMPACT

Can Impact Be Mitigated

Comment Index

Unknown

None

Minor

Potentially Significant

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?

X NONE

b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?

X

c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?

X NONE

d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?

X NONE

e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, other natural hazard?

X NONE

f. Other

X NONE

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

A. Proposal to remedy a soil erosion problem. The existing trail where erosion is occurring will be water barred & closed.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. AIR

Will the proposed action result in:

IMPACT

Can Impact Be Mitigated

Comment Index

Unknown

None

Minor

Potentially Significant

a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))

X NONE

b. Creation of objectionable odors?

X NONE

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?

X NONE

d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?

X NONE

e. For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs?  
(Also see 2a)

X NONE

f. Other

X NONE

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

X

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3. WATER

Will the proposed action result in:  
IMPACT  
Can Impact Be Mitigated

Comment Index  
Unknown  
None  
Minor  
Potentially  
Significant

a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?

X NONE - A.

b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?

X NONE - B.

c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?

X NONE

d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?

X NONE

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

- e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?  
X NONE
- f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?  
X NONE
- g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?  
X NONE
- h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?  
X NONE
- i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?  
X NONE
- j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?  
X NONE
- k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?  
X NONE
- l. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain?  
(Also see 3c)  
X NONE
- m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)  
X NONE
- n. Other:  
X NONE

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

A: The goal is to improve an erosion problem.

B: Improve drainage on closed trail

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. VEGETATION

Will the proposed action result in:

IMPACT:

Can Impact Be Mitigated

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

Comment Index  
Unknown  
None  
Minor  
Potentially Significant

a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?

X NONE

b. Alteration of a plant community?

X NONE

c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?

X NONE

d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?

X NONE

e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?

X NONE

f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?

X NONE

g. Other:

X NONE

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Trees and shrubs will be removed in trail corridor.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

5. FISH/WILDLIFE

Will the proposed action result in:  
IMPACT  
Can Impact Be Mitigated

Comment Index  
Unknown  
None  
Minor  
Potentially Significant

a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?

X NONE

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?

NONE

c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?

NONE

d. Introduction of new species into an area?

NONE

e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?

NONE

f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?

NONE

g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?

NONE

h. For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)

YES. A:

i. For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)

NONE

j. Other:

NONE

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

A: T&E specie present is Grizzly Bear. The area is in grizzly bear habitat. Project will hve no effect. Biologist and district will conduct T&E.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS

Will the proposed action result in:

IMPACT

Can Impact Be Mitigated

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

Comment Index  
Unknown  
None  
Minor  
Potentially Significant

a. Increases in existing noise levels?

X NONE

b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?

X NONE

c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?

X NONE

d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?

X NONE

e. Other:

X NONE

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

X

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. LAND USE

Will the proposed action result in:

IMPACT

Can Impact Be Mitigated

Comment Index  
Unknown  
None  
Minor  
Potentially Significant

a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?

X NONE

b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?

X NONE

c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?

X NONE

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?

NONE

e. Other:

NONE

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS

Will the proposed action result in:

IMPACT

Can Impact Be Mitigated

Comment Index

Unknown

None

Minor

Potentially Significant

a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?

NONE

b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?

NONE

c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?

NONE

d. For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)

NONE

e. Other:

NONE

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

Will the proposed action result in:  
IMPACT  
Can Impact Be Mitigated

Comment Index  
Unknown  
None  
Minor  
Potentially Significant

a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?

NONE

b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?

NONE

c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?

NONE

d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?

NONE

e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?

NONE

f. Other:

NONE

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES

Will the proposed action result in:  
IMPACT  
Can Impact Be Mitigated

Comment Index  
Unknown  
None  
Minor  
Potentially Significant

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:

NONE

b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?

NONE

c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?

NONE

d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?

NONE

e. Define projected revenue sources

NONE

f. Define projected maintenance costs.

A.

g. Other:

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

A. Trail maintance will be conducted on reroute apx \$300 / Yr. Also minor maintance will occur as needed during the winter is done by the Cut Bank Snowgoers under the trail grooming program.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION

Will the proposed action result in:

IMPACT

Can Impact Be Mitigated

Comment Index

Unknown

None

Minor

Potentially Significant

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

- a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?

X NONE

- b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?

X NONE

- c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational or tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)

X NONE

- d. For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)

X NONE

- e. Other:

X NONE

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

X

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Will the proposed action result in:

IMPACT

Can Impact Be Mitigated

Comment Index

Unknown

None

Minor

Potentially Significant

- a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?

X NONE

- b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?

X NONE

- c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?

X NONE

- d. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources?  
~~Attach SHPO letter of clearance.~~ (Also see 12.a)

X ~~Consultation will occur.~~ *USFS Categorical Exclusion, maintenance State review not required, results of eroded area-maintenance.*

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

e. Other:

NONE

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:

IMPACT

Can Impact Be Mitigated

Comment Index

Unknown

None

Minor

Potentially Significant

a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)

NONE

b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?

NONE

c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?

NONE

d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?

NONE

e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?

NONE

f. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)

NONE

g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.

NONE

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

No Action: This alternative would leave the trail in its current state and do nothing to resolve an erosion problem.

Improve present trail: This alternative could correct the erosion problem but only with the use of dirt moving equipment. This alternative would require the most disruption to soils and vegetation as well as be the most costly.

Project as proposed:

Our preferred alternative. This alternative will provide the best relief to the erosion while causing the least disturbance to the soil and vegetation.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

NONE

3. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

Categorical Exclusion

4. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

Listed in the summer & fall Lewis & Clark quarterly report

5. Duration of comment period if any:

6. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

Patty Johnston  
Lewis & Clark Forest Service  
Rocky Mtn. Distric  
1102 N Main Ave  
Choteau, Mt. 59422  
406-466-5341

Mike Hotchkiss  
Cut Bank Snowgoers  
P.O. Box 301  
Cut Bank, Mt. 59427  
406-873-4513

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

PART III.

NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

This project is integrally intertwined with the Skyland / Two Medicine snowmobile trails as well as other user groups. The purpose of this proposed project is to avoid and eliminate erosion on a portion of the existing trail. The cooperation between the Cut Bank Snowgoers snowmobile club, the Lewis & Clark National Forest Service Rocky Mountain Ranger District and Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks Dept is a tremendous example of local agencies and nonprofit organizations working together to produce a high quality recreational experience that would be hard for any one organization to successfully complete.

Many people use the trails in the national forest of northern Montana and any improvements to the trails are always welcome, especially when both the users and the environment benefit.

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc.  
Trail Re-route

PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST  
HB 495

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Person Reviewing \_\_\_\_\_

Project Location: Lewis & Clark National Forest Service,  
Rocky Mountain Front, near Marias pass,  
T 30 N, R 13 W, SEC 28, SW 1/4  
TRAIL # 137, West of the South Fork Two Medicine river.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK: Removal of Small trees to create a trail approximately 12 feet wide by 300 feet long. Old section of trail will be water barred and closed to prevent further erosion.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under HB 495 rules. (Please check all that apply and comment as necessary.)

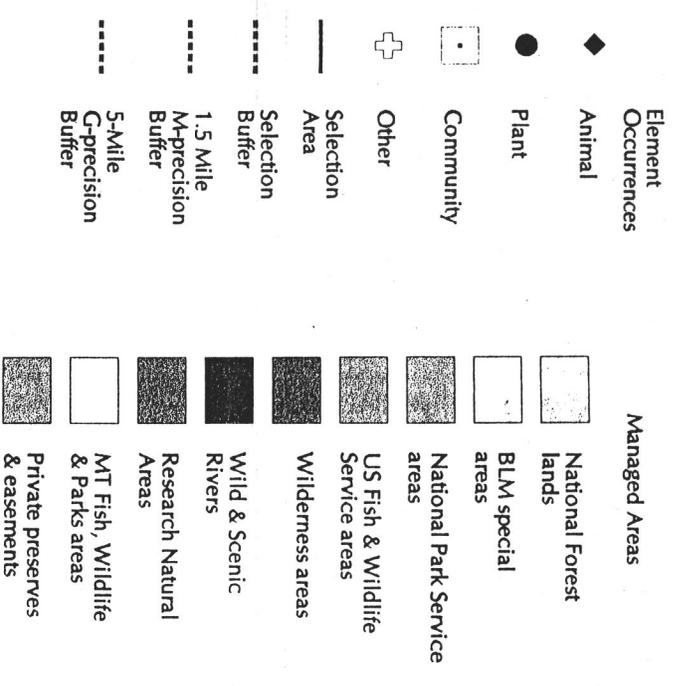
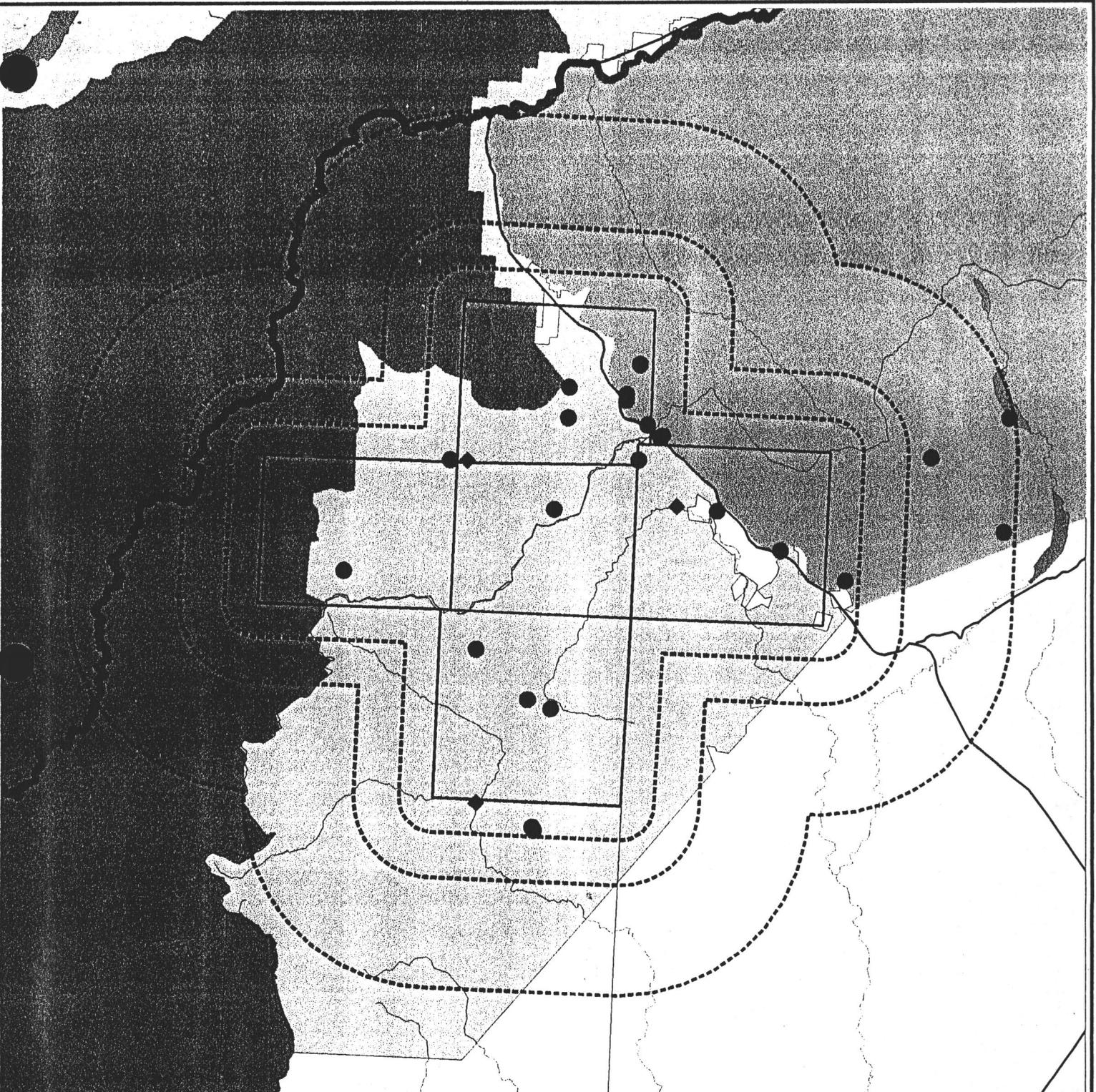
- A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?  
Comments: Only a very short section of trail will require any clearing. Most of new trail will make use of naturally occurring open areas.
- B. New building construction (buildings < 100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
- C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
- D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
- E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
- F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
- G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
- H. Any new above ground utility lines?
- I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
- J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects.

IF ANY OF THE ABOVE ARE CHECKED, HB 495 RULES APPLY TO THIS PROPOSED WORK AND SHOULD BE DOCUMENTED ON THE MEPA/HP495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HP495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

cc: Park Managers, Region \_\_\_\_\_

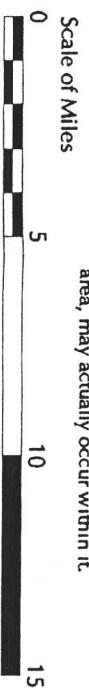
Project File

# Species of Special Concern Cut Bank Snowmobile Trails



NOTE: Additional species locations occur in this area but are not displayed due to their sensitive nature.

Not all legend items may occur on map. "Precision" buffers are designed to capture those records that, though mapped outside the selection area, may actually occur within it.



October 1988, 1996

MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM  
Species of Special Concern: ~~Cut Bank~~ Snowmobile Trails

Ref.	Name/Common Name	G Rank	S Rank	USESA	USFS	Township-Range-Sec.	County(ies)
003	URSUS ARCTOS HORRIBILIS GRIZZLY BEAR	G4T3	S1S2	LT	THREATENED		Flathead; Glacier; Pondera; Teton; Lewis and Clark; Powell
022	ERIOPHORUM VIRIDICARINATUM GREEN-KEELED COTTONSEDEGE	G4	S2S3			028N013W 06	Flathead
<del>040</del>	ALLIUM FIBRILLUM FRINGED ONION	G4	S2		SENSITIVE	028N013W 14	Flathead
<del>007</del>	HISTRIONICUS HISTRIONICUS HARLEQUIN DUCK	G4	S2B,S2N		SENSITIVE	029N011W 30 029N012W 00	Pondera
<del>044</del>	ONCORHYNCHUS CLARKI LEWISI WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT	G4T3	S3		SENSITIVE	028N012W 4 029N011W 30 029N012W 27	Pondera
<del>006</del>	SAUSSUREA Densa DWARF SAW-WORT	G3G5	S2		SENSITIVE	029N011W 18	Pondera
<del>006</del>	POTENTILLA QUINQUEFOLIA FIVE-LEAF CINQUEFOIL	G4	S1			029N011W 18	Pondera
<del>001</del>	POLYGONUM DOUGLASII SSP AUSTINAE AUSTIN'S KNOTWEED	G5T4	S2S3		SENSITIVE	029N012W 29	Pondera
033	ERIOPHORUM VIRIDICARINATUM GREEN-KEELED COTTONSEDEGE	G4	S2S3			029N012W 21	Pondera
<del>034</del>	ALLIUM FIBRILLUM FRINGED ONION	G4	S2		SENSITIVE	029N012W 16	Pondera
118	ONCORHYNCHUS CLARKI LEWISI WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT	G4T3	S3		SENSITIVE	029N013W 32	Flathead
<del>005</del>	ALLIUM FIBRILLUM FRINGED ONION	G4	S2		SENSITIVE	029N013W 16	Flathead
006	ALLIUM FIBRILLUM FRINGED ONION	G4	S2		SENSITIVE	029N014W 13	Flathead
<del>007</del>	ALLIUM FIBRILLUM FRINGED ONION	G4	S2		SENSITIVE	029N014W 14	Flathead
<del>009</del>	POLYGONUM DOUGLASII SSP AUSTINAE AUSTIN'S KNOTWEED	G5T4	S2S3		SENSITIVE	029N016W 2	Flathead
<del>008</del>	ALLIUM FIBRILLUM FRINGED ONION	G4	S2		SENSITIVE	029N016W 2	Flathead
<del>009</del>	ALLIUM FIBRILLUM FRINGED ONION	G4	S2		SENSITIVE	029N016W 1	Flathead
009	HISTRIONICUS HISTRIONICUS HARLEQUIN DUCK	G4	S2B,S2N		SENSITIVE	030N013W 28	Glacier
<del>001</del>	PLAGIOBOTHRYIS LEPTOCLADUS SLENDER-BRANCHED POPCORN-FLOWER	G4	S1			030N013W 21	Glacier
001	POLYGONUM POLYGALOIDES WHITE-MARGINED KNOTWEED	G4G5	S2			030N013W 31	Glacier
<del>004</del>	GRATIOLA EBRACTEATA BRACLESS HEDGE-HYSSOP	G4	S1			030N013W 21	Glacier
004	ALLIUM FIBRILLUM FRINGED ONION	G4	S2		SENSITIVE	030N013W 31	Glacier; Flathead

MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM  
 Species of Special Concern: ~~Cut Bank~~ Snowmobile Trails

Ref.	Name/Common Name	G Rank	S Rank	USES	USFS	Township-Range-Sec.	County(ies)
<del>002</del>	POTAMOGETON OBTUSIFOLIUS BLUNT-LEAVED PONDWEED	G5	S1		SENSITIVE	030N013W 10	Glacier
003	BOTRYCHIUM PARADOXUM PECULIAR MOONWORT	G2	S1		SENSITIVE	030N013W 31 <del>029N013W 6</del>	Glacier; Pondera
<del>004</del>	POTAMOGETON OBTUSIFOLIUS BLUNT-LEAVED PONDWEED	G5	S1		SENSITIVE	030N014W 36 029N014W 01	Flathead
<del>001</del>	ARTEMISIA NORVEGICA VAR SAXATILIS BOREAL WORMWOOD	G5T?	SH			031N013W 18	Glacier
<del>002</del>	PAPAVER PYGMAEUM ALPINE GLACIER POPPY	G3	S3			031N013W 04	Glacier
<del>005</del>	GRATIOLA EBRACTEATA BRACLESS HEDGE-HYSSOP	G4	S1			031N013W 35	Glacier
<del>003</del>	VIOLA RENIFOLIA KIDNEY-LEAF WHITE VIOLET	G5	S2		SENSITIVE	<del>031N014W 01</del> <del>032N014W 00</del>	Glacier

29 Records listed.

SNOWMOBILE GROOMING PROGRAM

- EXISTING TRAIL SYSTEM Regional Wildlife Clearance
- Trail expansion (attach map highlighting expansion)
- New trail system (attach map highlighting trail system)

CUT BANK SNOWGOERS, INC - SUMMIT / PIKE CREEK Rd  
Snowmobile Club (yellow highlighted)

Are there any wildlife concerns? YES  NO

If yes:

Species \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. Winter range \_\_\_\_\_ (list)
- 2. Travel corridor \_\_\_\_\_ (area)
- 3. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested alternate route \_\_\_\_\_

Other mitigation measures (such as signing; trail restrictions, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

- Approved with above-mentioned mitigation measures
- Not approved as submitted

*George R. Olson* 11/27/95

*David D. Stodd* 4/25/96

Regional Wildlife Biologist  
Date

Date

Regional Parks Manager

*Meke Adcock*  
4/25/96

3/91

CUT BANK SNOWGOERS  
P.O. BOX 301  
CUT BANK, MT 59017

4-18

Lewis + Clark

SNOWMOBILE GROOMING PROGRAM

Regional Wildlife Clearance

- Trail expansion (attach map highlighting expansion)
- New trail system (attach map highlighting trail system)
- EXISTING TRAIL - FROM PIKE LA RD TO NORTH EDGE OF S. FANK OF TWO  
Snowmobile Club CUT BANK SNOWBOERS INC. Medicine

Are there any wildlife concerns?                      YES                      NO

If yes:

Species \_\_\_\_\_

1. Winter range \_\_\_\_\_ (list)

2. Travel corridor \_\_\_\_\_ (area)

3. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested alternate route \_\_\_\_\_

Other mitigation measures (such as signing; trail restrictions, etc.)

- Approved with above-mentioned mitigation measures
- Not approved as submitted

Steve Olson  
Regional Wildlife Biologist  
Date

3/26/96  
Date

David S. Todd 4/25/96  
Regional Parks Manager

Mike Alderkhold  
4/26/96

CUT BANK SNOWBOERS INC.  
P.O. Box 301  
CUT BANK, MT 59427  
873-4513

copy

SNOWMOBILE GROOMING PROGRAM  
Regional Wildlife Clearance

KC037.96  
1/14/96

- Existing Trail System (attach map highlighting expansion)
- Trail Expansion (attach map highlighting expansion)
- New Trail System (attach map highlighting expansion)

Cut Bank Snowgoers Inc - Skyland Rd Area (yellow highlighted)  
(Snow Mobile Club)

Are there any wildlife concerns?

Winter Range: Snow depth at lower elevations precludes winter use by most ungulates. Tracks of one moose were observed in over 25 miles of travel in the area. Mountain goats may occupy winter range in higher elevations of some areas including Slippery Bill Mountain, Square Mountain and Crescent Cliffs, but these areas are not specifically included in the application and would be difficult (if not impossible) to access, even by aggressive riders on high-performance snow mobiles. Limited forest carnivore sign was observed.

Travel Corridor: Unknown. A pass over the continental divide, north of Crescent Cliffs, connecting loop trails between Skyland and North Badger Creek/Two Medicine River (FWP R4) could potentially be used as a travel corridor by mountain goats in that area.

Other: Some evidence (snow mobile tracks) of isolated enforcement problems with individuals violating area closures were observed (area 6-A on attached Snowmobile Access Information Map). However, the area is well signed by Cut Bank Snowgoers and these are exceptions to the regular pattern of use. Also, one inconsistency between existing FS road signing and the FS Snow Mobile Access Information Map (10/94) was observed, with a road in Area 6-C (legally open after November 30) posted as closed yearlong to snow mobiles. Other signs corresponded to access status indicated on the attached map.

Summary of Wildlife Concerns: Existing GIS maps of goat winter range could be overlaid on the Hungry Horse and Spotted Bear Snow Mobile Access Information Map to identify inconsistencies in management approach by FNF and FWP. However, even if some goat winter range is included in areas that are currently open to snow mobiles (after November 30) the potential for displacing goats is limited because of access limitations relating to topography and elevation.

Suggested alternate route: none

Other mitigation measures (such as signing; trail restrictions; etc.) see above sections for enforcement and signing concerns

- Approved with above-mentioned mitigation measures.
- Not approved as submitted

Kenn Coates  
Regional Wildlife Biologist      1/16/96      Date

David D. Todd R4 3/5/96  
Regional Parks Manager

4-18

FIAT HEAD

Safety Awareness Plan  
Cut Bank Snowgoers

A. Training

1. The club stresses the importance of operating a snowmobile in a safe manner and offers to the public a course on snowmobile safety. The course takes approximately 8 hours of class time and covers safety, general mechanical knowledge, and driving skills. This course meets Fish, Wildlife, and Parks standards and is taught by a certified safety instructor.
2. Public awareness and participation of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks, Forest Service, and manufacturers safety programs.
3. Encourage club members to take classes in first-aid and CPR that are offered throughout the year by different community organizations.

B. Trail Markings

1. Trail head signs will be used to inform riders and can be up-dated periodically. These will have information on:
  - a trail locations
  - b trail & snow conditions
  - c trail hazards
  - d emergency numbers
  - e safety tips
  - f club events
2. Trail intersections are marked with appropriate signs to warn riders of intersecting traffic. These signs may also include a map of the riders location.
3. Hazardous areas are marked with warning signs.
4. Groomer warning signs are placed on trail to warn riders that the groomer is working in the area.
5. Flags are used on the trails to mark the location of club outings and to help establish traffic direction.

C. Safety Equipment

1. Transceivers are available through the club to use if desired. These may be rented or bought.
2. Search poles are located at the base of ElTiger.

D. Club Events

1. Prior to club outings, the trails are groomed and checked for safety.
2. The club tries to avoid 2-way traffic at its outings by choosing a location where people can enter and leave the area using different routes.
3. The club does not support competitive events on the trails.
4. Advise members to fill out a *Montana Snowmobile Accident Report* form when there is an injury or when \$100 in property damage occurs.
5. Safety suggestions are discussed at club meetings.

6-22b

**E. Emergency Services**

1. Emergency help is available from the Middlefork Quick Response Unit. The Snowgoers contributes every year to this service.
2. The club also has furnished The Glacier County Sheriff's Department with a list of personnel and equipment available in case of an emergency.

**F. Safety Projects Being Proposed**

1. Building a warming hut.
2. Mercy Flight landing areas are being looked into using the GPS tracking system.
3. Emergency kits which may contain first-aid kit, space blankets, matches, non-perishable food, warm cloths, etc.

CUT BANK SNOWGOERS SIGN PLAN  
(updated 10 - 96)

GUIDE SIGNS:

-PARKING LOTS: TRAIL HEAD SIGN BOARDS

SKYLAND:

1. TRAIL MAP
2. AVALANCHE WARNING SIGN
3. CODE OF ETHICS
4. ACTIVITY INFORMATION
5. PACK-IT-IN PACK-IT-OUT SIGN
6. GROOMING PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS
7. TRAIL HEAD SIGN
8. OTHER (as deemed necessary by groomer / grooming committee)

SUMMIT:

1. TRAIL MAP
2. AVALANCHE WARNING SIGN
3. CODE OF ETHICS
4. ACTIVITY INFORMATION
5. PACK-IT-IN PACK-IT-OUT SIGN
6. GROOMING PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS
7. TRAIL HEAD SIGN
8. OTHER (as deemed necessary by groomer / grooming committee)

ON TRAIL LOCATION MAPS

1. SKYLAND / EAST FORK JCT
  - a. EAST FORK TO SUMMIT TURN
  - b. PIKE CREEK GATE
  - c. PIKE CREEK RD / PIPELINE JCT.
2. DODGE CREEK JCT
3. CHALLENGE CABIN / TWENTY FIVE MILE JCT
4. MORRISON JCT
5. END OF SKYLAND RD.

CROSSING EDGE MARKERS

1. EAST FORK TO SUMMIT CROSSING
  - a. 4 - TRAIL DIAMONDS on post
2. CHALLENGE CREEK BRIDGE
  - a. 4 - TRAIL DIAMONDS on post
3. CHALLENGE LOOP CROSSING
  - a. 4 - TRAIL DIAMONDS on post
4. EAST FORK LOOP CROSSING
  - a. 4 - TRAIL DIAMONDS on post

TRAIL DIAMONDS

1. USED AS REQUIRED

8-24

CUT BANK SNOWGOERS SIGN PLAN  
(updated 10 - 96)

WARNING SIGNS:

BRIDGES

1. SKYLAND RD ACCESS TEMPORARY CROSSING:
  - a. 2 - "BRIDGE AHEAD" Supplemental panel # 008-7
  - b. 4 - "DIRECTIONAL MARKER"
2. SKYLAND CREEK BRIDGE
  - a. 2 - BRIDGE SIGN # 007-22
  - b. 2 - "BRIDGE AHEAD" Supplemental panel # 008-7
  - c. 4 - "OBJECT MARKER"
3. PUZZLE CREEK BRIDGE
  - a. 2 - BRIDGE SIGN # 007-22
  - b. 2 - "BRIDGE AHEAD" Supplemental panel # 008-7
  - c. 4 - "OBJECT MARKER"

GATES & GATE POST (4 - OBJECT MARKERS ea)

1. EAST FORK & SKYLAND RD JUNCTION
  - 1a.. UPPER EAST FORK
  - 1b.. UPPER PIKE CREEK RD
3. NORTH MULE RIDGE LOOP TURN OFF
4. SOUTH MULE RIDGE LOOP TURN OFF
5. DODGE CREEK TURN OFF
6. WEST FORK OF SKYLAND TURN OFF
7. NORTH CHALLENGE LOOP TURN OFF
8. TWENTY FIVE MILE
9. SOUTH CHALLENGE LOOP TURN OFF
10. GRANITE CREEK
11. MORRISON JUNCTION  
*culvert just up road.*

INTERSECTION

Signs will be posted 200 feet from both sides of major groomed intersections. ~~Two~~ signs each location

*THREE*

1. EAST FORK JCT
  - 1a. PIKE CREEK RD & PIPE LINE JCT.
  - 1b. PIKE CREEK RD / SUMMIT TRAIL JCT.
2. NORTH MULE RIDGE LOOP
3. SOUTH MULE RIDGE LOOP
4. WEST FORK OF SKYLAND
5. NORTH CHALLENGE LOOP
6. SOUTH CHALLENGE LOOP *1 on 25 mile rd.*
7. GRANITE CREEK JCT
8. MORRISON JCT

CUT BANK SNOWGOERS SIGN PLAN  
(updated 10 - 96)

SHARP CORNERS (direction arrows at the corner, warning sign before the corner.)

1. SKYLAND ROAD/HWY 2 (1 left direction arrow, North bound)
2. PIKE CREEK RD/HWY 2 (1 right direction arrow, North bound)
3. SKYLAND RD APX 11 MILES South.
  - a. one each left/right direction arrow
  - b. one each left/right 90 degree corner warning sign

C. OTHER:

We will be doing some additional signing starting from the Summit parking area concerning a cross country ski trail in the area. The exact signs and locations required will developed thru out this year in cooperation with the Lewis & Clark Forest Service personal in Choteau.

being treated chemically. All of the known sites are also recorded on an atlas and a data base at the Rocky Mountain Ranger District. If you would like copies of the atlas or the EIS, please let either Brad McBratney or me know.

#20b We continually make ocular estimates of the known infested areas and update our atlas and data base to accurately report the level of infestation across the District. We also add any new infestations to the atlas and data base. Some reports of new infestations come from private individuals and some come from our own employees working in the area. We encourage all users of the area to report noxious weeds they find on the National Forest.

#23b There are no known conflicts with the two trails proposed under your grant request with historic roads or trails. Neither trail #133 or the Pike creek road are designated an historic road or trail. However, trail #133 is old enough to be designated an historic trail.

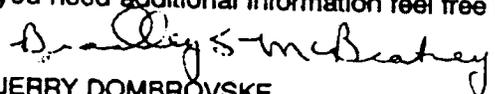
#23e Since the Forest Service is not proposing new activities concerning these two snowmobile trails, we have not consulted with SHPO. If consultation is needed, either the Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks or your club would need to request consultation with SHPO.

#25a Both of the trails under your grant proposal are several miles from existing wilderness areas. The groomed portion of the Pike creek road comes within approximately 1 mile of an area restricted from October 15 until April 15 to snowmobiles.

#25e There are cross country ski trails that cross the Pike creek road. I agree that both the snowmobile trail and the cross country ski trail should be marked to warn of the other use crossing the trail. To my knowledge, there have not been conflicts between snowmobilers and cross country skiers.

#29 To my knowledge, there have been no snowmobile trespasses on private land or wilderness as a result of State funded groomed trails on the Rocky Mountain Ranger District.

I hope that this is the information that you needed to complete your snowmobile grant program PEIS. If you need additional information feel free to contact either Brad McBratney or me.

  
JERRY DOMBROVSKE  
District Ranger

COPY OF LETTER MARKED A-1  
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8-29



LAW ENFORCEMENT



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service  
(406) 387-5243

Hungry Horse Ranger District  
PO Box 190340  
Hungry Horse, MT 59919-0340

File Code: 2350

Date: March 27, 1995

Mr. Brian Hoffman  
Box 2116  
Cutbank MT 59427

Dear Mr. Hoffman

This letter is in response to your telephone call concerning snowmobile related violations associated with the Skyland snowmobile trail system. The groomed trail system is entirely on National Forest lands. I am not aware of any problems associated with private land anywhere near the groomed trail. We have not issued any citations related to snowmobile use on private lands. This is beyond the scope of our authority and in the jurisdiction of the county sheriff.

I am aware of snowmobiles entering the Great Bear Wilderness in the Crescent Cliff area and we have also observed an occasional track in the wilderness in Giefer Creek. At this point, we have not issued any citations, however, anyone found in the wilderness will be cited.

I do not believe use of the groomed trail in Skyland is a factor in use occurring in the Great Bear. This area would be accessible without a trail and problems would still occur. In fact, the trail may deter riders from entering wilderness by providing an alternative place to ride.

I hope the Cutbank Club will continue making an active effort to inform and educate riders about wilderness boundaries and the prohibition of riding in the wilderness.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Fred Flint at this office.

Sincerely,

*Allen L. Christophersen*  
ALLEN L. CHRISTOPHERSEN  
District Ranger

8-29

FLAT HEAD



## LAW ENFORCEMENT PLAN

This plan integrates six enforcement strategies to generate compliance with public lands' travel restriction and state snowmobile regulations. Execution of these strategies will be a cooperative effort between enforcement agents from the U. S. Forest Service, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), and counties. These strategies are intended to meet each agency's enforcement mission and objectives for resource protection and public safety.

- # The initial approach for enforcing travel restrictions is the signing of trail heads. Prominently posted trail head information and maps will define travel restrictions on lands adjacent to established groomed trail systems. The trail grooming sponsor will, with the assistance from the land managing agency, post the travel restriction regulations.
- # Local motorized clubs will annually inform their membership of travel restrictions next to established and maintained trail systems. Club members will be encouraged to disseminate the information to visiting back country users.
- # To regularly ascertain the highest concentration of use; random trail patrols will occur. Trail safety will be encouraged through public contacts during patrols.
- # Enforcement efforts will target locations where there are motorized intrusions into restricted travel areas, such as tree plantations. Speed limit signing and patrols will be made.
- # Back country use will be monitored through coordination of interagency enforcement personnel. FWP and Forest Service staff will share information and combine efforts to conduct saturation enforcement activities at known high use locations and during high use periods. Normally these periods are weekends, holidays and after new snow occurrences.
- # FWP wardens will enforce the registration decal compliance law.

Trail patrols will be done on days when environmental conditions and/or budgets allow. Safety of agency personnel will also be a determining factor when patrols will occur. Rapidly changing environmental conditions and potential avalanche hazards must be considered before conducting patrols.

8-30

## LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT

Statewide there were 20,384 snowmobiles registered for the 1995 to 1996 registration year.

FWP wardens will continue to make safety for the public a primary goal of the enforcement effort as it relates to snowmobiling. Numerous contacts by FWP wardens in the field with snowmobilers is in regards to safety issues. The safe operation of snowmobiles, proper lighting, DUI and alcohol issues, and reckless operation are major areas of emphasis. In addition, FWP wardens are equipped with portable radios and some rescue equipment along with first aid kits for back country emergencies.

Hunting, trapping and ice fishing are other areas of recreation where snowmobile use is common. Most of these activities are conducted in areas outside of the groomed trail systems, but FWP wardens still contact recreationists and check for registration, equipment and safe operation while checking for hunting, fishing and trapping regulations.

Other areas of concern by FWP wardens is the operation of snowmobiles in wilderness areas. The majority of snowmobilers operate in the areas that are open, but some venture into closed or wilderness areas. Safety is a major concern here because it seems that many of the slide areas are also in the remote locations.

Poker runs and races are events that attract numerous snowmobilers. These events themselves are usually not an enforcement problem, but the use of alcohol and the related operation in towns or on roadways by some before or after the event require additional FWP warden presence.

The primary objective of FWP wardens is the safe and enjoyable recreation of snowmobilers. This is accomplished through the enforcement and education efforts of FWP wardens in the field and through education classes and functions. Many of the snowmobile clubs are taking the lead in conducting these classes and FWP wardens will need to be available to assist them in there efforts to make snowmobiling a safe and enjoyable activity.

8-31