

3/14/14



To: Thomas Tidwell, Chief USDA Forest Service
From: Howie Wolke and Marilyn Olsen, owners Big Wild Adventures, Inc.
Re: EMC-Administrative Reviews, Objections to Shoshone National Forest proposed Final Land Management Plan

This is on behalf of Howie Wolke and Marilyn Olsen plus Big Wild Adventures, Inc. Big Wild Adventures is a permitted outfitter/guide service for backpacking in portions of the Shoshone National Forest plus other Roadless and Wilderness areas throughout the West.

As previously stated in our official comments of October 19, 2012, we object to the recommendations against wilderness designation for all of the roadless areas on the Forest. In particular, for the reasons stated in our 2012 comments, roadless areas such as Franc's Peak, Wood River, Trout Creek, the Wyoming High Lakes, Sunlight Basin, Blackwater Creek, the DuNoir and others should be recommended by the Forest Service for Wilderness designation.

We also particularly object to allowing any mechanized or motorized use in the Franc's Peak and Wood River roadless areas; world-class wildlands with unique ecological values that should be recommended as additions to the contiguous Washakie Wilderness area.

The proposed mountain bike route over Bonneville Pass, down through the West DuNoir and out the Pinnacles Trail is another particularly bad idea. For one thing, it's illegal. In addition, the ongoing illegal utilization of this route by mountain bikers (District Ranger Rick Metzger has refused to enforce the law and halt these violations) is causing resource damage to soil and native vegetation, which I have documented with photos that I sent to Ranger Metzger. Numerous citizen groups and individuals have enthusiastically proposed the DuNoir for Wilderness designation for nearly 4 decades. Arguably, there is no roadless area anywhere in the U.S. more deserving of protection. Please cancel the bike route plan and recommend the DuNoir for Wilderness designation.

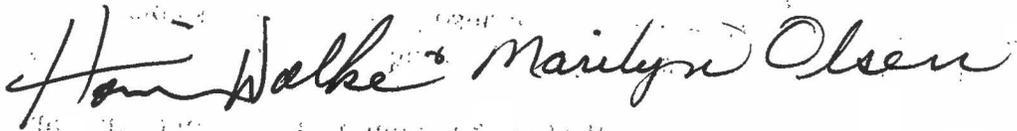
We might add that in addition to our comments on the draft Forest Plan, we also sent the Forest Supervisor a heart-felt letter dated November 17, 2013 regarding mountain biking in the DuNoir. The last sentence of that letter was "We are interested in your thoughts". There was no response. Mr. Tidwell, we are American taxpayers and deserve a response (we also pay the Forest Service for our privilege as permitted outfitter/guides).

We are also concerned with the future of our business, which partly depends upon the DuNoir remaining wild. In recent years, illegal mountain bike groups traveling much faster than hikers or horse-riders can travel have zipped past our groups, churning up the soil and vegetation and spooking wildlife. It diminishes the wilderness experience that our clients pay for. If this silliness continues, we may have to cease running trips in the DuNoir. When our clients sign up for one of our trips, they expect real wilderness. And they spend money in Jackson, Dubois and various points in between, including airports, motels, gas stations, outdoor shops, gift shops and much more. In fact, a major

attraction of our trips in the Absaroka Range is its wildness. The designated Teton and Washakie Wilderness Areas, plus contiguous roadless lands and the southeastern quadrant of Yellowstone National Park constitute the sixth largest chunk of wild country (in terms of acreage) remaining in the U.S. south of Alaska (Foreman & Wolke 1989, *The Big Outside*). And it is the number one area with regard to including the most distant point from a road in the lower 48 states (Foreman & Wolke, same). These attributes are important to our clients, and the best way for the Forest Service to protect such attributes is to recommend qualifying roadless areas for Wilderness designation.

Again, we are appalled by the across the board anti-wilderness recommendations for the DuNoir and other roadless areas on the Shoshone. We find it extremely disturbing that the Forest Supervisor obviously has so little appreciation for the unprotected de-facto wilderness lands of the Shoshone National Forest. Surely, given the Shoshone's location in the heart of the incomparable Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem the Forest Service can come up with something much, much better. It is not too late!

Sincerely,

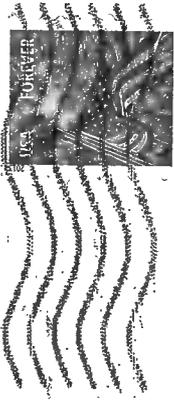
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Howie Wolke and Marilyn Olsen". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed contact information.

Howie Wolke and Marilyn Olsen
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