

4-107



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Fortine Ranger District  
Fortine, MT 59918

Reply to

Date January 28, 1982

F

Mike Baker  
Box 67  
Kalispell, MT 59901

L

I would like to request your services in maintaining approximately 25 to 30 miles of snowmobile trail on the Grave Creek Road and into Ten Lakes Scenic Area. This has long been a route used by both local snowmobilers and by groups from the Kalispell and Libby areas. We have been attempting to develop a snowmobile program for several years and I appreciate your visit to the District today.

Please consider this as permission or authorization that you need to use your equipment and to maintain this trail. The lower portion of the route may require the movement of your snowgroomer and associated equipment over a plowed road. This road is a Forest Service facility and you have my permission to use your machines on this plowed portion. Total distance involved will be about a mile and a half; however, traffic is light and I do not think you will encounter any difficulties.

We look forward to meeting with you on either the 8th or 9th. As we discussed today, if you can give us some notice, we will accompany you along the route so that you can get a feel for the situation and determine for yourself what our needs are.

I sincerely hope that we can develop a program that would allow you to give us another maintenance trip either late in February or the first of March and another again late in March. This schedule would work very well for us and would fit local use patterns.

We will attempt to come up with a traffic counter to get some estimate of the amount of use that we receive. Hopefully we will be able to find one in the Supervisor's Office or in the Engineer's Office; however, if we are unsuccessful we may take you up on your offer to see if you could find one for us.

Your ability to help us with our grooming program will be a major step in developing the winter recreational facility that we are trying to establish on the Grave Creek Road. Your grooming meshes nicely with our plans to



develop a parking area, unloading ramps, interpretive signs and the other things that we hope to have operational by next year.

Between our two agencies, I think that we can develop something that people in the northern portion of Lincoln County and in the Kalispell-Whitefish-Columbia Falls area will be able to enjoy and take advantage of.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.



JOHN W. PRITCHARD  
District Ranger

March 22, 1982

Mike Baker  
Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department  
490 North Meridian Road  
Kalispell, MT 59901

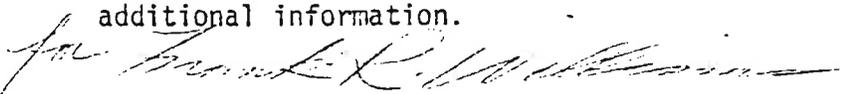
The Fortine Ranger District is involved in improving/developing the snowmobile use of the Grave Creek/Wigwam Trail. This winter the District has installed and monitored a snowmobile trail counter as well as marked the trail from mile post eight to post twenty-five, or approximately seventeen miles.

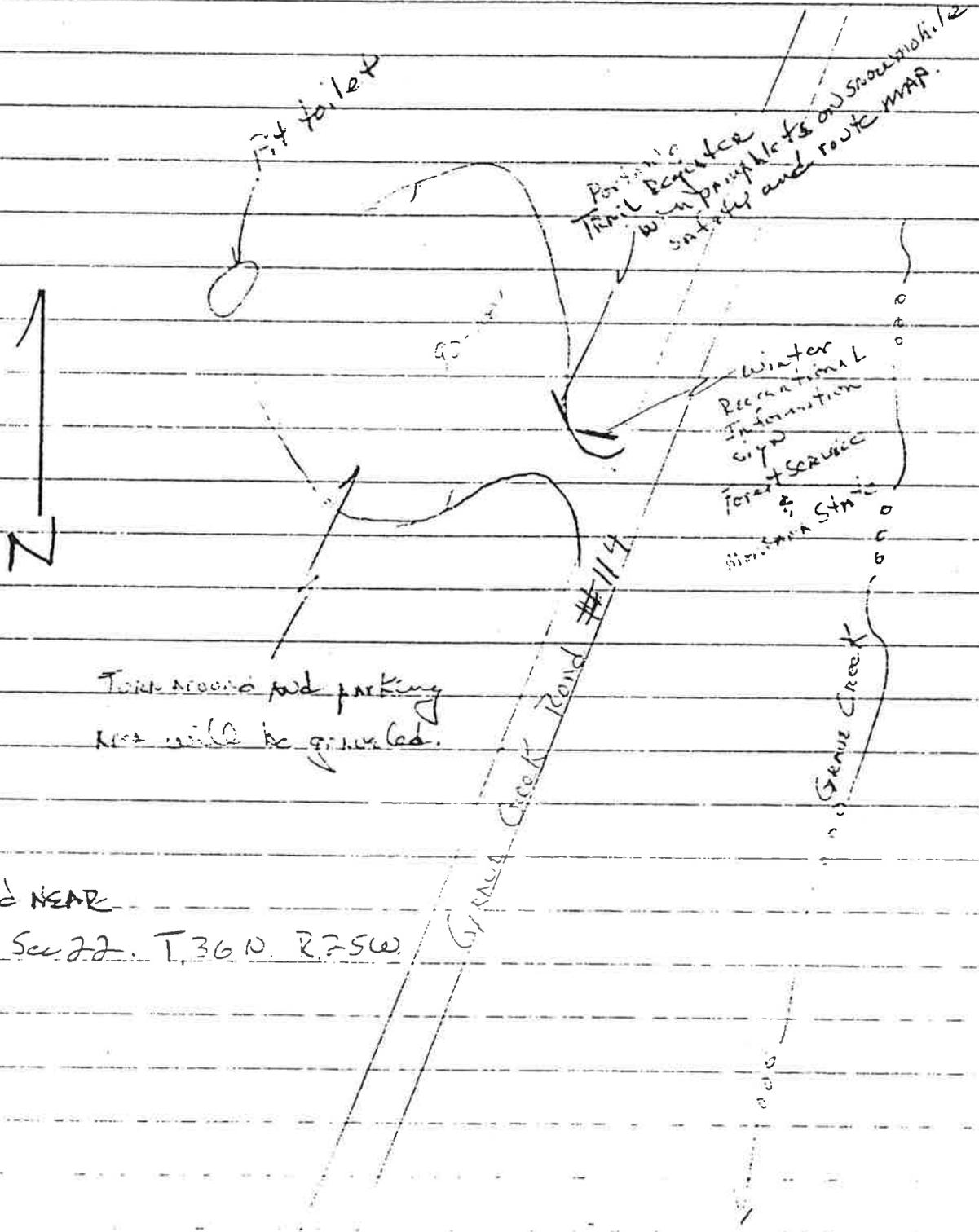
The counter has recorded a greater number of snowmobile uses than had been expected for the early portion of the season. (See Attachment #1). This increased use could be attributed to the grooming of the trail by your state Recreation Department in February for the Flathead Snowmobile Club. However, for the past two weeks, use of the trail has fallen off partly due to the ~~unimproved~~ condition of the trail and/or the peak snowmobile use of the area has been typically in April.

In the near future, either within this fiscal year or the next, the District is going to develop a trail hear turn around and parking area with appropriate signing. (See attachment #2), off the Grave Creek Road near mile post eight. In the following Fiscal year, we will improve on the site by adding a pit toilet with several picnic tables. We feel that by providing these additional items, the current as well as other snowmobile users will enjoy their experience even more. Lincoln County Highway Department has plowed Grave Creek Road up to the proposed turn around and parking area. There is no reason to believe they will not continue this public service activity.

To further assist and attract additional users from the Flathead, Libby, and Eureka areas. The Fortine District Ranger would like to request three groomings of the trail. Possibly one in the early winter, then spaced throughout hte season. In the past, the end of snowmobiling for this areasis around June 1, when the roads and snowfields open up.

Although the District does not have recorded data for the entire season, we have projected the use for the year after taling with local individuals involved in snowmobile use. We will be happy to respond to any questions concerning this matter. Please contact Ron Williams or Eric Heyn for additional information.

  
JOHN W. PRITCHARD



Located NEAR

S24. Sec 22. T.36 N. R.75 W.



Fortine Ranger District  
Fortine, MT 59918

4-110

2310

March 23, 1983

Tom Hay  
Regional Supervisor  
Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
P.O. Box 67  
Kalispell, MT 59901

The Fortine Ranger District has greatly appreciated your organization's effort in snowgrooming the Grave Creek/Wigwam trail and a short segment of the Stahl/Clarence Creek trails. Grooming of these trails greatly enhances the winter recreation users enjoyment for local people, as well as those snowmobile enthusiasts in Libby, Kalispell, Whitefish, and Columbia Falls areas. In an effort to monitor use of the trail, a counter and a trail visitor register were installed and checked weekly. This monitor program has shown that a weekly average of 23 snowmobilers have utilized the trail, so far this season. The majority of these came following the grooming of the trail in February.

The district has been in the process to enhance established snowmobile use on the trail. This past year the district completed graveling of the Birch Creek Recreation site and snowmobile trailhead. In addition, we installed a pit toilet and a trail registration box at the site. This coming season we are planning to complete an area recreation information map/bulletin board. This map (approximately scale of 2"/mile) and bulletin board will assist the winter recreation users to obtain approximate location and distances between various points, plus timely notices. The map will also tie in with the Recreation Opportunity Guide (ROG) handout (see attachment).

In addition, this past year the district worked out an agreement with Lincoln County to snowplow and sand/gravel the Grave Creek Road up to the trailhead (Birch Creek). This plowing assisted the winter recreation user getting to the site plus allowing them additional room for turning around and parking.

I would at this time request that you place the Grave/Wigwam trail on the approved snowmobile grooming route during the winter of 1983-84. This request can be considered permission or authorization to utilize the State's equipment on the trail.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Ron Williams or Eric Heyn at 882-4451,

  
JOHN W. PRITCHARD  
District Ranger

Attachment

ECH/



# Snowmobiling Contents



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest Service

Grave Creek/Wigwam Basin

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**TRAILHEAD:** The trailhead is located 8.2 miles up Grave Creek road #114. The road is plowed by Lincoln County to this location (Birch Creek Recreation Site).

**ACCESS:** 1) From Eureka travel 8.1 miles south on U.S. Highway 93, turn left on to Grave Creek road #114. Follow this road for 8.2 miles to trailhead location.  
2) From the Fortine Ranger District office, travel north 5.6 miles, turn right onto Grave Creek road #114.

**CONSIDERATIONS:** Snowmobiling from the Birch Creek Recreation site allows access into the upper Grave Creek and Wigwam Basin areas. Generally snow depths along the Grave Creek route are sufficient to enjoy snowmobiling from mid-December into early March. Prior to December 1 many of the side drainages and access roads (trails) are closed to motorized vehicles. This closure assists in maintaining secure areas for wildlife.

When traveling on the major route, as well as secondary side drainages, caution should be taken to avoid avalanche areas which traverse near and over many routes.

The trip up Grave Creek and into the Wigwam Basin offers spectacular scenery. Although there are some play areas along Grave Creek and the Divide Creek area, the better play areas are in the Wigwam Basin. Past timber harvesting activity has opened up the area. Snow is held in these higher elevations well into the early spring months, care should be taken when utilizing these areas to avoid the young trees which are less than two feet above the snow surface.

Motorized access into the Ten Lake Scenic Area is available during the winter months (December 1 through March 31). The primary route into the Bluebird and Wolverine Basins are via the upper Wigwam Basin.

Two cabins are available in the area for public use. The Weasel Cabin and the Wolverine Cabin (see map). The Weasel Cabin is easily accessible whereas the Wolverine Cabin is more remote and difficult to locate at times, due to very high snow depths.

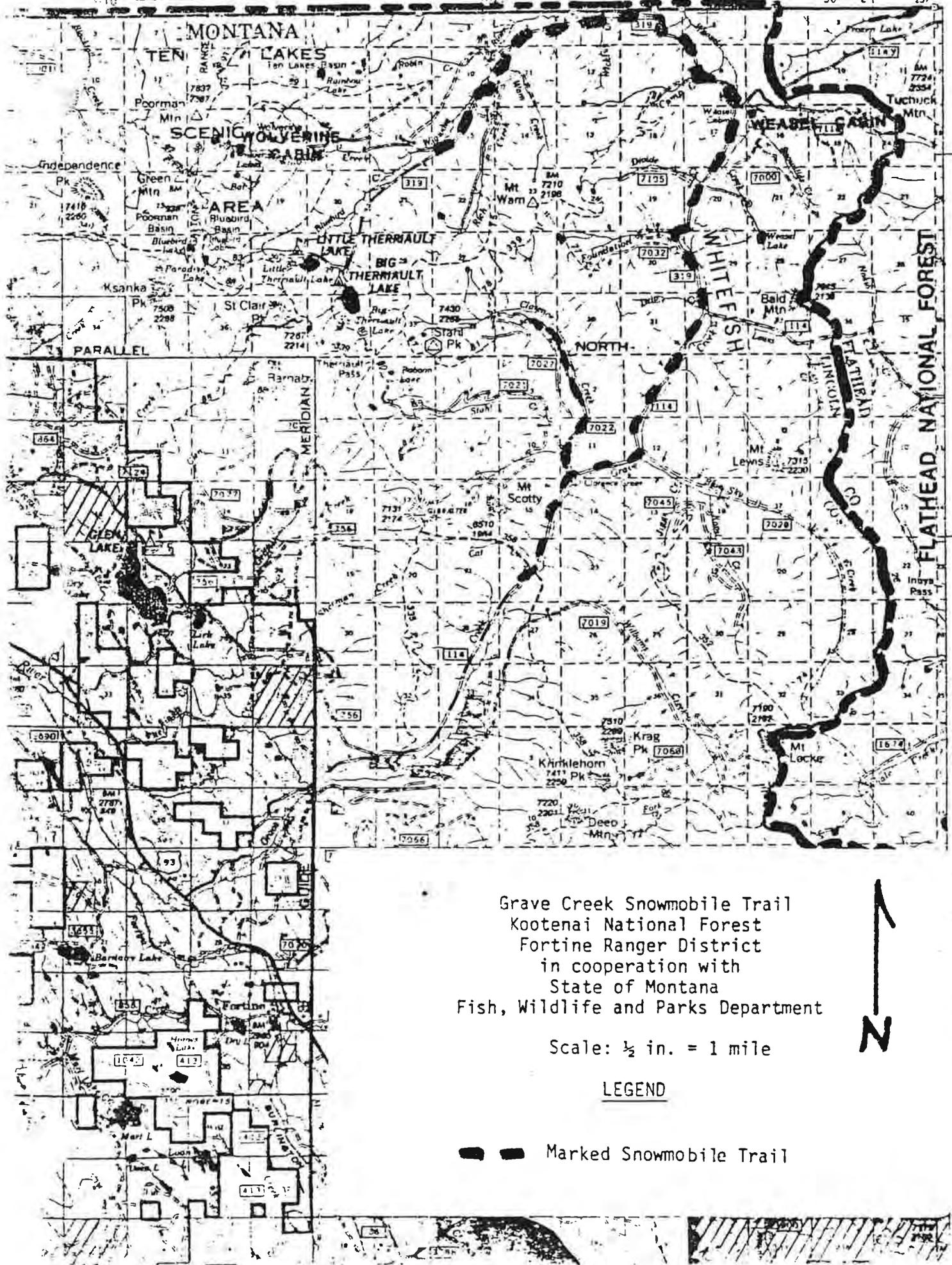
**REMEMBER:** Litter of any kind spoils the picture for the next person, and it will be there after the snow is gone. PACK-IT-IN/PACK-IT-OUT.

By midwinter, animals don't have any surplus energy. Watch wildlife from a distance. Chasing them or harassing them in any way is forbidden by law.

In areas of steep slope or overhanging snow drifts there is always the danger of avalanche.

**BE PREPARED:** If a machine quits, or someone is injured, be prepared. This means traveling in groups of at least two, and having the food, clothing, and fire starting capability to survive an unexpected stay in the woods.

Leave a note on your vehicle with your route -- it's a good idea.



Grave Creek Snowmobile Trail  
 Kootenai National Forest  
 Fortine Ranger District  
 in cooperation with  
 State of Montana  
 Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department

Scale: 1/2 in. = 1 mile

LEGEND

■ ■ Marked Snowmobile Trail



T 37 N

T 36 N

T 35 N

4 T

COUNTER SERIAL NO. 79470

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
RECREATION AND PARKS DIVISION

TRAFFIC COUNTER RECORD

AREA GRAVE CREEK/Wigwags MONTH AND YEAR 2/83  
 LOCATION 9.5 mile marker on GRAVE CREEK trail/road  
 COUNTER READING CONVERSION COUNT/2 \_\_\_\_\_ COUNT/1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 TO VEHICLE READING

DATE	DAY	TIME	A. M. P. M.	COUNTER READING	DIFFERENCE	<i>Actual</i>
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17	Thursday			37508		
18	Friday	08:30	am	37590	82	41
19						
20						
21						
22	Tuesday	09:15	am	37656	66	33
23						
24						
25	Friday	09:05	am	37702	46	23
26						
27						
28	Monday	09:30	am	37750	48	24
29						
30						
31						

TOTAL 121

COUNTER SERIAL NO. 79470

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
RECREATION AND PARKS DIVISION

TRAFFIC COUNTER RECORD

AREA Grass Creek / Virginia MONTH AND YEAR 3/83

LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTER READING CONVERSION TO VEHICLE READING COUNT/2 \_\_\_\_\_ COUNT/1 \_\_\_\_\_

DATE	DAY	TIME	A. M. P. M.	COUNTER READING	DIFFERENCE	Actual Use
1						
2						
3						
4	Friday	08:30	AM	37978	46	24
5						
6						
7	Monday	10:05	AM	37976	78	37
8						
9						
10						
11	Friday	12:30	AM	37908	32	16
12						
13						
14	Monday	9:00	AM	37976	68	24
15						
16						
17						
18	Friday	11:15	AM	38054	78	37
19						
20						
21	Monday	8:30	AM	38100	46	23
22						
23						
24						
25	Friday	9:00	AM	38175	75	37
26						
27						
28	Monday	10:00	AM	38280	96	48
29						
30	Thursday	11:15	AM	38350	70	35

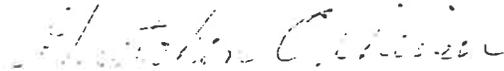
TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_ 281



Keep me informed if any portion of your application will be arriving after April 1. Promptness and completeness of the application has a bearing on it funding.

If you have any questions, or I can be of any assistance, please give me a call at 444-3750.

Sincerely,



Gretchen Olheiser, Chief  
Projects and Planning Bureau

GO/fo

cc: Tom Hay  
Terry Knupp

419/U

**MONTANA**

**DEPARTMENT OF**

**FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS**

Region One  
Box 67  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
April 2, 1984

*Eric  
Pla Lie  
Solded on Grave Cr.* 4-112  


Tom Hope, District Ranger  
Murphy Lake Ranger Station  
Fortine, MT 59918

Attn: Ron Williams

*Dave  
For your records  
on snowmobile  
grooming  
Crowth*

Dear Ron:

Mike Baker, of our Parks and Recreation staff, suggested I write to you regarding our concerns in the snow grooming of the Grave Creek - Wigwam trail and segment of Stahl-Clarence Creek trail. Mike and I discussed this project last spring in response to your letter of March 23, 1983.

From a wildlife standpoint, I am not opposed to a snow grooming program in the areas mentioned above, with some stipulations.

The proposal does encourage additional traffic and activity across identified big game winter range at a time when nutritional stress could be most significant. The proposal also facilitates access to the higher elevations of the upper Grave-Wigwam area in which grizzly bear den. With these two basic concerns in mind, I have suggested to Mike that grooming not occur before January 1, or after March 31, with all snowmobiling terminated by April 15. The reasoning is to allow big game to establish normal use patterns on the winter range before grooming and snowmobile traffic is encouraged. Then direct the snowmobiling traffic through the winter range area with the least amount of disturbance. The spring restriction would address grizzly bear den emergence and travel to low-land situations for spring foraging, of which the lower Grave Creek meadows have been very important in past years.

We have become rather methodical in evaluating habitat disturbances in a grizzly bear environment but we should be just as concerned about human disturbances in a grizzly environment.

I, also, am a bit confused over why the Forest needs a waiver for low level aerial surveys in the Ten Lakes area to check for caribou when snowmobiling is acceptable and encouraged?

Respectfully,

*H. James Cross*  
H. James Cross  
Wildlife Biologist

HJC/mjw

1984  
SEARCHED  
SERIALIZED  
INDEXED  
FILED  
APR 11 1984  
FBI - BUTTE

**Montana Department  
of  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**



4-113

1420 East Sixth Avenue  
Helena, Montana 59620

December 26, 1984

Tom Hope, District Ranger  
Fortine Ranger District  
Fortine, Montana 59918

Dear Tom:

JAN

I was recently reviewing our snowmobile project files and came upon the April 2 letter to you from Jim Cross, Wildlife Biologist from our Regional Office in Kalispell. In that letter, he requested that trail grooming of the Grave Creek - Wigwam Trail and segment of Stahl - Clarence Creek Trail not occur before January 1 or after March 31. He further requested that all snowmobiling in this area be terminated by April 15. This is to allow big game to establish normal use patterns on the winter range before grooming and snowmobile traffic is encouraged. The grooming would then direct the snowmobile traffic through the winter range area with the least amount of disturbance. The spring restriction would address grizzly bear den emergence.

Thanks for your cooperation, Tom, and for the trail count information you are able to provide.

Sincerely,

*Gretchen Olheiser*

GRETCHEN OLHEISER, Chief  
Project and Planning Bureau  
Parks Division

Imp

cc: Tom Hay  
Terry Knupp  
Jim Cross

4-114

**Montana Department  
of  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**



Helena, MT 59620  
March 6, 1985

Mr. Tom Hope  
District Ranger  
Fortine Ranger District  
Fortine, MT 59918

Dear Tom:

The application process for requesting snowmobile funds is being changed for those clubs which enter into written agreements with the department. This does not affect you because your grooming is done by department employees using department equipment.

The deadline for submitting applications has been extended to May 1 because of the change in application procedures for the clubs affected by that change. To avoid any confusion or advantage the deadline extension will apply to your club also.

You may of course get your application in at anytime before May 1. Please be sure that your application includes:

1. Written landowner permission;
2. Maps depicting the areas to be groomed or plowed;
3. Assurance (in the case of projects on public lands) that projects are consistent with approved forest service travel plans and BLM unit plans;
4. An indication of the volunteer efforts, money or equipment your club would be willing to provide.

This has been a great snowmobile season for most areas with plenty of snow and many enthusiastic riders. Registration appears to be up also. Congratulations on a good season.

Sincerely,

*Gretchen Olheiser*

Gretchen Olheiser  
Snowmobile Program Coordinator

GO/bl

cc: Tom Hay  
Terry Knupp

408/12.6  
408/12/file

*Ben -  
What  
is this?  
3/27*

*442 3750*

MAR 21 1985  
MS

4-115

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Kootenai NF  
Fortine RD

P.O. Box 116  
Fortine, MT  
59918

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Reply to: 2310

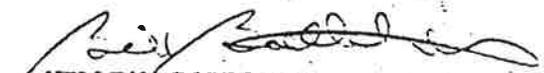
Date: 5/1/85

Mike Baker  
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
PO Box 67  
Kalispell, MT 59901

Dear Mr. Baker:

I appreciate your efforts in snowgrooming the Grave Creek snowmobile trail. In response to your recent telephone call, please consider this as permission or authorization for you to use your equipment and to maintain the trail. I understand you would be grooming it twice during the winter of 1985-86.

Please let me know before grooming occurs. If you have any questions please contact Ron Williams or Jeff Adams at 882-4451.

  
WILLIAM BOETTCHER  
District Ranger

Enclosure: Map of Grave Creek Snowmobile Trail

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Kootenai NF  
Fortine RD

P.O. Box 116  
Fortin MT  
59918

4-116 <sup>FBI</sup>

Caring for the Land and Serving People

Reply to: 2300

Date: 3/28/89

Jerry Syth  
Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club  
P.O. Box 453  
Eureka, Montana 59917

Dear Mr. Syth:

Your request to establish and groom two snowmobile trails on the Fortine Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest is approved. This approval is contingent on three items; (1) The Forest Service will conduct an analysis on the cumulative effects of the resources within the effected area. The analysis must indicate there is no significant problem with your proposal. (2) The placement of the required signs, (3) and the signing of the Development and Operating Agreement between the Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club, the Montana Department of Fish Wildlife & Parks, and the Forest Service.

The groomed snowmobile trails will be; (1) along the Grave Creek Rd 114 and Therriault Lakes Road #319, (2) and along the Stahl Creek Rd #7021.

The trails will be groomed only during the months of January, February, and March of the 1990 calender year. Grooming frequency will be permitted at a maximum of 2 times per month.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Wade Spang at Murphy Lake Ranger Station, 882-4451.

Sincerely,

  
THOMAS PUCHLERZ  
District Ranger

Ten Lakes Snowmobile  
Club  
P.O. Box 453  
Eureka, MONTANA  
59917

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

For  
Service

Kootenai NF  
Fortine RD

P.O. Box 116  
Fortine, MT  
59918

4-117

Caring for the Land and Serving People

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Reply to: 2300

Date: 4/14/90

JERRY SYTH  
TEN LAKES SNOWMOBILE CLUB  
P.O. BOX 453  
EUREKA, MONTANA 59917

Dear Mr. Syth:

Thank you, Jerry for your cooperation last winter with the signing and grooming the Grave Creek Snowmobile Trail. It appears that the trail received a lot of use.

You have requested a letter from the Forest Service granting approval for grooming next year on the Grave Creek, Therriault Lakes, Stahl Creek and Williams Creek Roads.

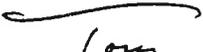
I am granting approval for the signing and grooming on these routes, contingent on the approval of the Development and Operating Agreement between the Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Forest Service.

The trails would be groomed during the months of January, February and until March 15, 1991.

We anticipate being able to repair the slide on Stahl Creek this summer. If it is repaired as planned you would be able to groom on that route.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Ron Williams at Murphy Lake Ranger Station, 882-4451.

Sincerely,

  
THOMAS PUCHLERZ  
District Ranger

ORDER NUMBER: 17 254

4-118

ORDER OF THE FOREST SUPERVISOR  
SPECIAL RESTRICTIONS

Forest Development Roads  
Fortine Ranger District  
Kootenai National Forest

Pursuant to the Secretary of Agriculture's Regulations, Title 36 CFR 261.50(B) the use of motorized vehicles is prohibited on the Grave Creek road #114, Therriault Lakes road #319, Clarence Creek road #7022, Williams Creek road #7019, and Stahl Creek road #7021 during January 1 through March 15 of 1991 (36 CFR 261.54(A)). Motorized snowmobiles are authorized. The purpose of these restrictions are to provide for the safety of the snowmobile users on these roads by not mixing snowmobiles and regular vehicular traffic.

Temporary exceptions are authorized to the above restrictions for any federal, state, or local law enforce officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty or any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by the Forest Service under a permit, license or contact.

Violation of this order is punishable by a fine of not more than \$500.00, imprisonment of not more than six (6) months, or both under authority of 16 USC 551.

s order is effective January 1, 1991.

Signed this 17<sup>TH</sup> day of DECEMBER 1990 at Libby, Montana.



ROBERT L. SCHRENK  
Forest Supervisor  
Kootenai National Forest

4-119

# TEN LAKES SNOWMOBILE CLUB

P.O. BOX 131  
FORTINE, MONTANA 59918  
406 • 882 • 4474

September 12, 1991

Ron Williams  
Murphy Lake Ranger Station  
Fortine Ranger District  
Fortine, MT 59918

Dear Ron,

Dave Nesbitt stopped by Tuesday and requested that the club inform the district what trails it wished to groom this upcoming snowmobiling season. The club wishes to groom the same trails it did last year with a few additions.

As shown on the enclosed map and funding requests to the state, the club would like to add Frozen Lake Road and Weasel Lake Road. I plan to mail a letter to the Glacier View Ranger District today, a copy of which is enclosed, to request grooming its portion of the Frozen Lake Road.

Our state grooming funds have been frozen (no pun intended) at last year's levels, so the club would try to groom these additional trails as our budget allows, perhaps the Frozen Lake Road once or twice in conjunction with the 1992 Trans-Montana Snowmobile Ride for Multiple Sclerosis, and perhaps the Weasel Lake Road more often.

As shown on the funding requests, the club seeks permission to groom Grave Creek Road (#114 and #319) 25 miles to Big and Little Therriault Lakes, Stahl Creek Road (#7021, 4 miles), Clarence Creek Road (#7027, 4 miles), Williams Creek Road (#7019, 7 miles), Weasel Lake Road (#7000, new 2 miles) and Frozen Lake Road (#7110, new 3 miles Fortine Ranger District and #114Y, new 3 miles in the Glacier View Ranger District, Flathead National Forest.)

Also enclosed is the grooming log for last season. I am not sure if this documents the entire grooming done last season. Please call club president Jerry Syth at 882-4474, grooming chairman Herb Clark at 882-4657 or myself at 296-2514 (office on Thursday) or 882-4814 at home if more information is needed.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Svoboda  
club vice-president

4-120

# TEN LAKES SNOWMOBILE CLUB

P.O. BOX 131  
FORTINE, MONTANA 59918  
406 • 882 • 4474

September 12, 1991

Robert Hurd  
Glacier View Ranger District  
Flathead National Forest  
P.O. Box W  
Columbia Falls, MT 59912

Dear Mr. Hurd,

The Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club has groomed trails in the northern part of the Fortine Ranger District of the Kootenai National Forest for the last couple of years. The club would like to extend the groomed trail system into the neighboring Glacier View Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest.

Specifically, the club wishes to groom a portion of Forest Service Road #114 from the Kootenai-Flathead forest boundary line to the Frozen Lake area adjacent to the United States-Canada border. The road is accessed by Forest Service Road #7110 on the Fortine Ranger District, which connects to the Therriault Lakes Road #319, the latter which is currently in the Fortine groomed trail system.

The club estimates the length of the additional trail grooming from Road #319 to the Frozen Lake area at approximately six miles, with about half of those miles in the Glacier View Ranger District. The club feels the proximity of the Frozen Lake Road #114 to the Fortine Ranger District's trail system makes it more economically and logistically feasible for the Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club to groom the trail rather than the Flathead Snowmobile Association, which does not object to the Ten Lakes club's proposal.

The Ten Lakes club seeks to groom the two roads to include the popular Weasel Cabin site and Frozen Lake area. You may remember the Canadian border at the Frozen Lake area was the destination of the first Snowmobile Ride Across Montana for Multiple Sclerosis in January of this year. We would like to use the area again in 1992 to begin the 2nd annual cross-state ride, and request your permission to do so.

This year, about 75 riders met at the Frozen Lake area, about half of them local riders from the Flathead and Tobacco valleys and the other half who rode across the entire state in the fund-raising event.

Enclosed is the club's trail grooming agreement with the Fortine Ranger District, which estimated at least 500 snowmobiler user days on the present trail system from mid-January through March of this year. Also enclosed is a copy of the map showing Roads #7110 and #114 as shaded for proposed grooming the club submitted to the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks for grooming funding. Apparently funding for all the state's snowmobile clubs has been frozen at last year's levels, but we seek the Glacier View Ranger District's approval to groom the trail once or twice next season, if our budget allows, to determine the physical feasibility of the job, most likely in conjunction with the cross-state ride.

You probably will need more information concerning both our grooming request and area use request for the 1992 cross-state ride. Please do not hesitate to contact club president Jerry Syth at 882-4474, grooming chairman Herb Clark at 882-4657 or myself at 296-2514 (office) or 882-4814 (home).

Sincerely,



Mark A. Svoboda  
club vice-president

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Kootenai NF  
Fortine RD

P.O. Box 116  
Fortine, MT 59918

4-121

Caring for the Land and Serving People

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Reply to: 7700

Date: 12-10-91

Subject: Grooming of Grave Creek Trails

To: District Ranger

On Monday, December 9th, Mike Liu and I visited the trails to be groomed by the Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club. We also installed two signs, one at the end of the groomed portion of the trail on Stahl Creek Road and another on Clarence Creek Road. As we traveled the trails up to Stahl and Clarence, we found neither these areas or the main road had been groomed. The Groomer was parked at Birch Creek Recreation Area, and has been receiving repairs according to Herb Clark. The grooming of these trails is to begin on December 1.

The signs that were to be reinstalled by the Club have not been put up yet, and at this time will not be able to be placed in the tubes we had placed last year. Several weeks ago I had mentioned to Jerry Syth that these signs needed to be up before the snow got too deep. I also mentioned that if they were not installed before the tubes were covered, that affixing the signs to existing road signs may be the best plan. What must be stressed though, is the need to have the signs up before the snow hits, and down before the summer is over. I contacted Herb Clark, and he will get the signs up as soon as possible. I have requested that the club notify us before and immediately after they have groomed the trails so that we may inspect the grooming.

The trail at the time of our visit, showed only light use on the majority of the groomed system, with moderate use to Stahl Creek and up to Weasel Lake. I would say a maximum of 15-20 snowcats had utilized the area.

David Nesbitt  
Resource Forester

\*



3/7/95

Marty -

In the Ten Lakes area, ungulate use is minimal. A few mule deer may winter near the parking area and a few moose may winter on the SW slopes throughout the area. Overall, I do not believe Winter Range should be a major concern. After 2 trips through the area this winter, I have yet to see an ungulate track.

Grizzly bears and wolves both use/occupy the area and are currently listed under ESA. Wolf use during winter months is probably sporadic and limited to the extreme lower elevations. On Jan. 25 I observed a large wolf track in Sec. 15 T36 R25. I do not believe grooming/snowmobiling is negatively affecting wolves in the area.

Grizzly bears use the area during summer months and may den there during winter. The grooming of trails does not negatively affect grizzly bears. However, the potential exists for snowmobilers in the upper basins to displace grizzly bears from dens. Personally I do not view this as a major problem. However, others may disagree. To my knowledge, the actual displacement of a grizzly bear from a den <sup>by a snowmobiler</sup> has never been documented in the Ten Lakes area or elsewhere.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 882-4697.

Take care,

Tim Thier 2

Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club Inc.  
Po Box 404, Eureka, MT 59917

4-123

May 3, 1995

Dave Nesbitt, Resource Forester  
USDA Forest Service  
Kaotenai NF, Fortine RD  
Po Box 116  
Fortine, MT 59918

Dear Dave Nesbitt,

The Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club Inc. would officially like to request the approval of the Forest Service of our up coming grooming program for 1995 - 96 season.

The Club would like to request the same trails listed in last seasons permit which include: Graves Creek road # 114, Therriault Lakes road # 319, Little Therreault Lake road # 7085, Clarence Creek road # 7022, Weasel Lake road # 7108, Frozen Lake road # 114A and Stahl Creek road # 7021. Equalling 41 miles total 33 miles approximately seven times per week, 8 miles 7.5 times seasonally.

If this meets with your Districts approval please contact Dave Conklin or Marty Watkins  
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 490 North

Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901.

If there are any questions please don't hesitate to contact Jerry Syth at 882-4474 or myself at 889-3384.

Sincerely,

Susan K Hawkins

Susan K. Hawkins

Secretary / Treasurer

xx

enclosed; map of proposed grooming trails,  
grooming schedule and project cost

4-124

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Kootenai NF

Fortine RD  
P.O. Box 116  
Fortine, MT 59918

Caring for the Land and Serving People

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File Code: 2200

Date: 5-1-96

Marty Watkins  
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks  
490 North Meridian  
Kalispell, Montana 59901

Dear Marty:

I recently received a letter from the secretary/treasurer of the Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club concerning the club's request for the upcoming years grooming program on the Fortine Ranger District. I reviewed the areas requested, which are the same ones groomed last year. These trails are Grave Creek Road #114, Therriault Lakes Road #319, Little Therriault Lake Road 7085, Clarence Creek Road Road #7022, Weasel Lake Road #7108, Frozen Lake Road #114A, and Stahl Creek Road #7021. See attached map.

The Fortine District supports the grooming of all of these roads. The Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club has donated considerable time to keep these trails in good condition during the winter, helping to make the Grave Creek/Wigwam Creek drainages a very popular snowmobiling area. We do appreciate all the work and time they put in grooming these trails, which allow many winter recreationist to have a safe and well maintained trail.

If you have any questions or concerns about the grooming program being done on the district, please feel free to give me a call.

Sincerely,



David Nesbitt  
Resource Forester

cc Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club Inc.  
P.O. Box 131  
Fortine, Montana 59918

4-125

Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club Inc.  
PO Box 404  
Eureka, Mt 59917

May 1, 1996

Dave Nesbitt, Resource Forester  
USDA Forest Service  
Kootenai NF, Fortine RD  
Po Box 116  
Fortine, MT 59918

Dear Dave Nesbitt,

The Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club Inc. would officially like to request the approval of our upcoming grooming program for 1996-1997 season.

The club would like to request the same trails listed in last seasons permit which include: Graves creek road number 114, Therreault Lakes road number 319, Little Therreault Lake road number 7085, Clarence Creek road number 7022, Weasel Lake road number 7108, Frozen Lake road number 114A and stahl Creek road number 7021. Equalling 41miles total 33 miles approximately seven times per week, 8 miles 7.5 times seasonally.

If this meets with your Districts approval please contact Dave Conklin or Marty Watkins Montan Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 490 North Maridian Road, Kalispell MT 59901

If there are any questions please don't hesitate to contact Jim Voyles 882-4670 or myself at 889-3384.

Sincerely,

Susan K. Hawkins  
Secretary/Treasures

4-126

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Kootenai NF

Fortine RD  
P.O. Box 116  
Fortine, MT 59918

Caring for the Land and Serving People

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File Code: 2200

Date: 5-24-95

Susan Hawkins  
Secretary, Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club  
Eureka, Mt 59917

Dear Susie,

In regards to yesterdays conversation, here is the information I have come up with. This is only a brief overview on some of the items, but hopefully will be good enough to get you started.

Part II Section 1 (e) Avalanche information

I have included a copy of the avalanche hazard report done on the groomed trail.

Summer and winter use figures are estimates. We have placed counters on the groomed trail for the last few years, but have found counter accuracy to be somewhat questionable. Our spring thru fall use estimates are just that, estimates, but from our years of observations, we place total recreation user days in Wigwam/Grave Creek drainages to be approximately 25,000 people for the spring, summer, fall time frame. The winter usage increases every year, with this year (November thru May) totalling approximately 3,500 user days.

Part II Section 3 (h) Surface water contamination

Contact Dan Neuman at D1. He has requirements to store fuel.

Part II Section 4 (e) Noxious weeds

The Fortine District has sprayed the Grave Creek Road and the Birch Creek Recreation Area with herbicides for the last 5 years to contain the spread of Spotted Knapweed. This has been a fairly successful endeavor, reducing the number of plants and stopping the spread of the plant to a large degree. The majority of the spread of this plant is due to motorized vehicles (mainly cars and trucks using the roads). Spread of the seeds of

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this plant is minimal in the wintertime, in my opinion, due to the covering of the plant and exposed soil by snow. There is a chance that some seed may be brought into the trailhead by vehicles in the winter, but the spreading of the seed by snowmobiles over deep snow should be very minimal.

Part II Section 5 (a)

Lynn Johnson, Wildlife Biologist on the Fortine Ranger District, agrees with the report provided by the Fish, Wildlife and Parks biologist, Tim Thier. She may provide more information later, but with the short timeframe does not allow adequate analysis on her part.

Part II Section 6

We do not have any definitive studies on noise levels in regard to the snowmobiles produced at this time. I do have some older studies if any of those could be of assistance.

Part II Section 9 (e) Traffic Hazards

The Grave Creek Road #114 is a lane and half wide from the Stoken Bridge up to Therriault Lakes. This is a narrow, often times very slippery road that can be quite hazardous if a truck with a snowmobile trailer is met coming downhill. Increasing the use on this road will require increased maintenance.

Part II Section 10 (a)

The outhouse at Birch Creek Recreation Area will require pumping out more often with increased use. This cost will come out of Forest Service recreation funds.

Part II Section 11 (c)

There has been no tourism report done on this area.

The Ten Lakes Proposed Wilderness and the Thompson Seton Proposed Wilderness are adjacent to a large portion of the groomed snowmobile trail.

Part II Section 12

The groomed trail lies totally on existing Forest Service Roads, that receive heavy use throughout the spring, summer, fall and winter. The impact to cultural or historical resources has been realized just by the construction of this road, and are not further compromised by the grooming of the snowmobile trail.

Hopefully the data provided will assist you in the formulation of your Environmental Analysis. If you need further help, feel free to contact me at 882-4451.

Sincerely,

David Nesbitt  
Resource Forester