



Panhandle Riders Association
P.O. Box 61
Ponderay, ID 83852
February 5, 2011

Coeur d'Alene, River Ranger District
Attn: NEPA Coordinator, Fernan Office
2502 E. Sherman Ave
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

Dear Sir or Madame,

I am writing on behalf of the Panhandle Riders Association out of Sandpoint. I am president of that club. We oppose in the strongest possible terms the (proposed) winter closures of Forest Service Roads 614 and 918, south of 4th of July Pass.

These roads are critically important to ATV use during the winter, for a variety of reasons. First, these roads are at moderate elevation, and are often among the few places passable to ATVs during the winter time. Second, this area is one of the very few areas where winter ATV operation is currently allowed in the Coeur d'Alene vicinity. All areas North of 4th of July Pass, and the equally popular Bunco Road trailhead are closed to ATV operation due to grooming for snowmobile operation.

These roads are popular because they provide a route from the trailhead to Harrison or Carlin Bay, both of which are popular stops for lunch. This both offers recreational opportunities to riders, and also enhances rare wintertime business in these two locations.

Unlike non-motorized recreationalists, ATV operation is limited to roads designated via the motor vehicle use maps. The roads in question are among the very few places open to motorized operation in this region. This is completely opposite the situation for non-motorized recreation, specifically cross country skiers. These users are allowed to operate anywhere, with no restrictions. Given the great number of miles of roads that have been closed to motorized operation in this area, these users have a vast amount of areas and potential trails on which to recreate. Since they are not limited to designated roads or trails, ultimately they have a virtually unlimited amount of area in which to recreate.

We, the 132 members of the Panhandle Riders Association, request that the Forest Service continues to keep these roads open for motorized operation during the winter months.

Brian Dunham
President, Panhandle Riders Association