

Recreation Quality in Flathead Forest Plan Revision

**Swan View Coalition
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We urge the Flathead National Forest to strive for higher quality recreation, not simply more recreation, as it revises its Forest Plan.

High quality recreation minimizes disturbance to wildlife and other people, it derives the greatest amount of satisfaction from the least land area, and it releases the least carbon into the atmosphere in order to reduce each person's contribution to global warming.

Motorized vehicles contribute a disproportionate share of air pollution, noise pollution and greenhouse gases - while also covering a greater land area in which they disrupt wildlife and other people.

Mountain bikes also contribute to a disproportionate disruption of wildlife and other people due to higher speeds and greater land area covered in an outing.

Horseback riding, while more similar to the pace of hiking, nonetheless requires larger pickups and trailers similar to those needed for motorcycles, ATVs and snowmobiles. This results in a disproportionate release of carbon to the atmosphere as well.

Hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing maximize quality as they minimize noise, pollution, carbon emissions, and the disruption of wildlife and other people.

Reserving and protecting more land area for hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing will help each person and the Flathead National Forest reduce the impacts to fish, wildlife, other people and global warming - as will reducing the miles of road open to motor vehicles and in need of constant and costly maintenance.

We each have a moral obligation to reduce our impacts as more people seek to re-create a meaningful relationship to the great outdoors - which is the root of recreation.

The Flathead National Forest has an obligation to lead the public away from higher-impact-per-person "recreation" for the sake of current and future generations of people, fish and wildlife.

Our recommendations on how to do this can be found in our "Assessment and Prescriptions" and "Citizen reVision of the Flathead Forest Plan" - along with a summary of the scientific research supporting them - at:

<http://www.swanview.org/home/articles/reports-documents>