

Who Is Involved?

Most Importantly: YOU

If you enjoy winter recreation in the Gunnison Valley, you **should** get involved. Whether you are a full or part-time resident of the Gunnison Valley, a repeat or first time visitor, the winter travel management plan affects YOU!

USDA Forest Service

The USFS will make and implement the winter travel management plan in the next few years. For more information or to comment, contact the USFS:

Website: <http://fs.usda.gov/gmug>

GMUG Public Affairs: 970-874-6717

Gunnison National Forest: 970-641-0471

Your Local Government

Find out what local and county governments are doing to address winter travel management. Ask for winter travel to be added to their agendas; attend town meetings and voice your opinion.

Gunnison County: jhouck@gunnisoncounty.org

Crested Butte: dmacdonald@crestedbutte-co.gov

Mt. CB: jfitzpatrick@mtcrestedbutte-co.gov

Gunnison: rforrest@gunnisonco.gov

Advocacy Groups

Go to the websites of local advocacy groups to learn about different points of view.

Crested Butte Nordic: www.cbnordic.org

Gunnison Nordic: www.gunnisonnordic.com

CBMBA: www.cbmba.org

Share the Slate: www.sharetheslate.com

Silent Tracks: www.silenttracks.org

SnoTrackers: www.snotrackers.com

Winter Wildlands Alliance: www.winterwildlands.org

How Can I Get Involved?



To be effective, the winter travel plan needs data on winter recreation users. To date, there is no data (historical or current) regarding the numbers and types of winter recreational use in the backcountry of the Gunnison Valley.

The collection of meaningful and unbiased data is essential for the USFS to make informed decisions that will lead to the implementation of a new winter travel management plan which reflects current and projected future levels of use, optimizes everyone's experience and safety, and minimizes environmental impacts.

In 2016, Silent Tracks applied for and received a grant from the Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley (CFGV) to collect winter recreation use data. Silent Tracks has forwarded these grant funds to WSCU to design and implement a Data Collection Initiative (DCI). The DCI will be supervised by WSCU faculty and executed by Master in Environmental Management (MEM) and other WSCU students. Data collection is scheduled to begin in the winter of 2017.

Support the WSCU/MEM DCI by donating to the effort initiated by Silent Tracks' CFGV grant. Silent Tracks is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, so donations are tax-deductible and will be treated as restricted contributions, to be used ONLY for the DCI.

Visit www.silenttracks.org and click on "Donate for Data", or mail check to "Silent Tracks/Data Collection Initiative", PO Box 2022, Crested Butte, CO 81224.



Does the Gunnison National Forest Need a New Winter Travel Plan?



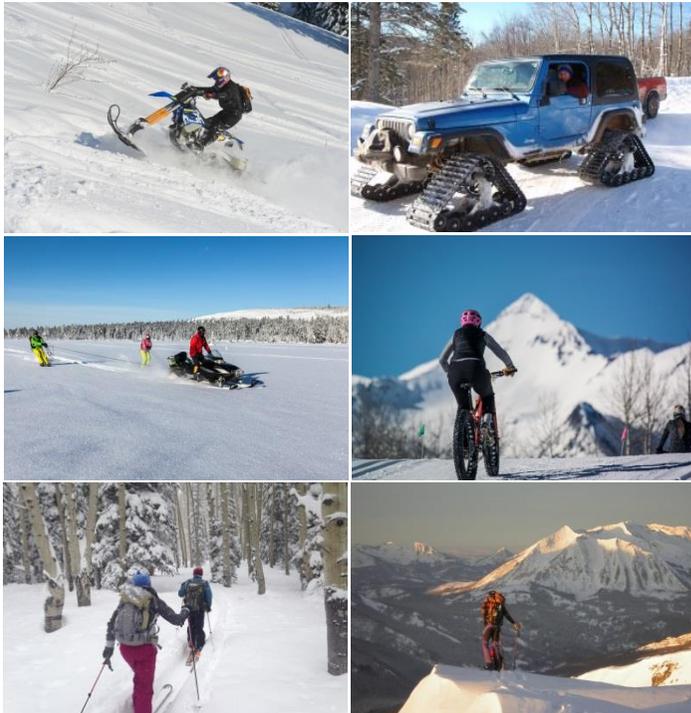
This brochure was produced by Silent Tracks and its publication was made possible by a grant from the Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley. Design concept was provided by WSCU Master in Environmental Management students.

What Is a Winter Travel Plan?

The Forest Service manages winter uses to protect National Forest System (NFS) resources and to provide opportunities for motorized and non-motorized recreation. A Winter Travel Management Plan designates roads, trails, and areas on NFS lands to provide for over-snow vehicle (OSV) use.

An over-snow vehicle is defined as “a motor vehicle that is designed or modified for use over the snow, and that runs on a track and/or a ski or skis”. As a result of continuously evolving innovations in gear and technology, there are many new types of users in the OSV travel management landscape.

Ideally a Winter Travel Management Plan should provide a balanced use of public lands to optimize everyone's recreation experience: motorized, human-powered, hybrid, and mechanized users.



What is the Current Winter Travel Plan for Gunnison National Forest?



The existing Winter Travel Management Plan (WTMP) for Gunnison National Forest is graphically illustrated in the “Winter Recreation around Crested Butte” brochure/map.

The winter travel map that depicts designated winter recreation uses in the Crested Butte area is free and can be picked up at the local Forest Service Office, or the Crested

Butte/ Mt. Crested Butte or Gunnison Visitor Centers. View it online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gmug>

The text version of the current (1995) Gunnison National Forest WTMP document is available online at <http://www.silenttracks.org/resources>



Why Does Gunnison National Forest Need a New Winter Travel Plan?

In January 2015 a federal court ruling mandated that all U. S. National Forests are required to have a Winter Travel Management Plan for over-snow-vehicles (OSV). While the Forest Service approved a winter travel plan for the areas surrounding Crested Butte in 1995, there is no comprehensive winter travel plan for the Gunnison National Forest (GNF). Furthermore, the Crested Butte area winter travel plan is more than 20 years old, and will expire on December 31, 2020 for some of the drainages.

Winter recreation use in the GNF has seen a dramatic increase, especially in the last five years: advances in technology now allow snowmobile riders and hybrid skiers to travel further and higher into backcountry terrain; backcountry Alpine Touring (AT) skiing is one of the fastest growing sports in the U.S.; new sports and related gear such as fat bikes, e-bikes, snow motorcycles, and snowcats, are bringing even more people to the backcountry.

The current WTMP includes 16 management areas with winter recreation uses designated as “open”, “closed”, “emphasis motorized”, “emphasis non-motorized” and “discouraged”. These designations are vague, confusing, and open to misinterpretation, plus the Forest Service has limited funds to ensure enforcement.



Challenges and conflicts between users to share a limited space in the winter backcountry are already apparent, resulting in increased trailhead congestion, safety and waste management issues, potential environmental impacts to winter wildlife habitat, and the recreational experience being negatively impacted.