

Date submitted (UTC-11): 1/18/2019 12:00:00 AM

First name: Leo

Last name: Jones

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Dear Sir,

For over 30 years hang gliders and paragliders have launched their unpowered foot launched gliders from King Mountain near Moore, Idaho. King mountain is one of the most spectacular and precious sites to fly hang gliders in the USA, and one of the best sites in the World. It has been the site of many week long cross country flying competitions over the years, with sometimes as many as 100 pilots attending, together with drivers, families etc. Flights of 100 miles are not uncommon, flying in the abundant thermals over the Lost River Range, Lemhis, Bitterroots, and as far as Anaconda and Yellowstone. The local community has been most friendly and supportive, and we bring a considerable amount of commerce to this small community.

While we are very supportive of preserving wilderness areas, for every reason, we would be very sad to lose the ability to fly from King Mountain. Flying sites for hang gliding are few and far between. Our impact on the environment is minimal - we run a few steps and fly. We are good stewards of the land, we don't drive off road, and we are scrupulous about keeping our launch areas pristine. In the past the Forest Service has been most helpful to our small community, fixing the road to launch at King, and building a metal ramp to make launching easier.

We would ask that the wilderness boundary be drawn around the road and the launch areas there. There are precedents for this. We had a similar situation in Northern CA, a few years ago, when large areas of the Mendocino National Forest became part of the Snow Mountain Wilderness Area, including the part where we had a built our (FS Service permitted) launch ramp on St John Mountain. When we brought this to the attention of the Forest Service, and impressed upon them how important the flying site on St. John was to the area, they helpfully redrew the wilderness boundary around our ramp, enabling us to keep the site open.

The Boxer-McKeon Wilderness Bill of 2008 created 470,000 acres of new wilderness in the Inyos and Whites, while preserving access to hang glider launches, preserving the launches (Paiute, Gunter and Gunter bail-out, Mazourka, Mt Tom, McGee) by excluding these roads and launches from the wilderness (called cherry-stemming).

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Leo Jones