

# Washington National Forests

The Washington national forests contain:

- 2,575 miles of groomed winter trails
  - 2,309 miles of groomed trails open to snowmobiles
  - 266 miles of groomed trails closed to snowmobiles
- See Table A.

The Washington national forests contain:

- 7,812,000 acres of land
  - 4,507,658 acres of land open to snowmobiles
  - 1,103,818 acres of non-wilderness land closed to snowmobiles
  - 2,261,444 acres of designated wilderness land, also closed to snowmobiles
- See Table C.

The NVUM surveys for the Washington forests show there are an estimated:

- 520,550 cross-country ski and snowshoe visits annually
  - 362,900 snowmobile visits annually
- See Table B.

These numbers show that on national forest land in Washington, there are 10 times more miles of groomed motorized trails than non-motorized even though NVUM participation figures show that statewide the number of skier and snowshoer visits exceed snowmobile visits by 50 percent. This disparity results in a density of 1,957 skier and snowshoer visits per non-motorized mile compared to 157 snowmobile visits per motorized mile.

Neither the Gifford Pinchot National Forest nor the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest offer any groomed non-motorized trails, despite the fact that there are more skiers than snowmo-

bilers in both forests. In the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, skiers and snowshoers outnumber snowmobilers two to one, yet all of the 195 miles of groomed trails are motorized. In the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, use is estimated to be equal, yet not one of the 134 miles of groomed trails is designated non-motorized. Given the fact that the NVUM numbers do not account for displaced visitors, the numbers of cross-country skiers and snowshoers in these forests may be even higher.

Even in Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, where 227 miles of trail are designated non-motorized, density is 1,095 skier and snowshoer visits per non-motorized mile versus 77 snowmobile visits per motorized mile. There are twice as many non-motorized users visiting this forest, yet there are six times more motorized miles than non-motorized miles of groomed trails.

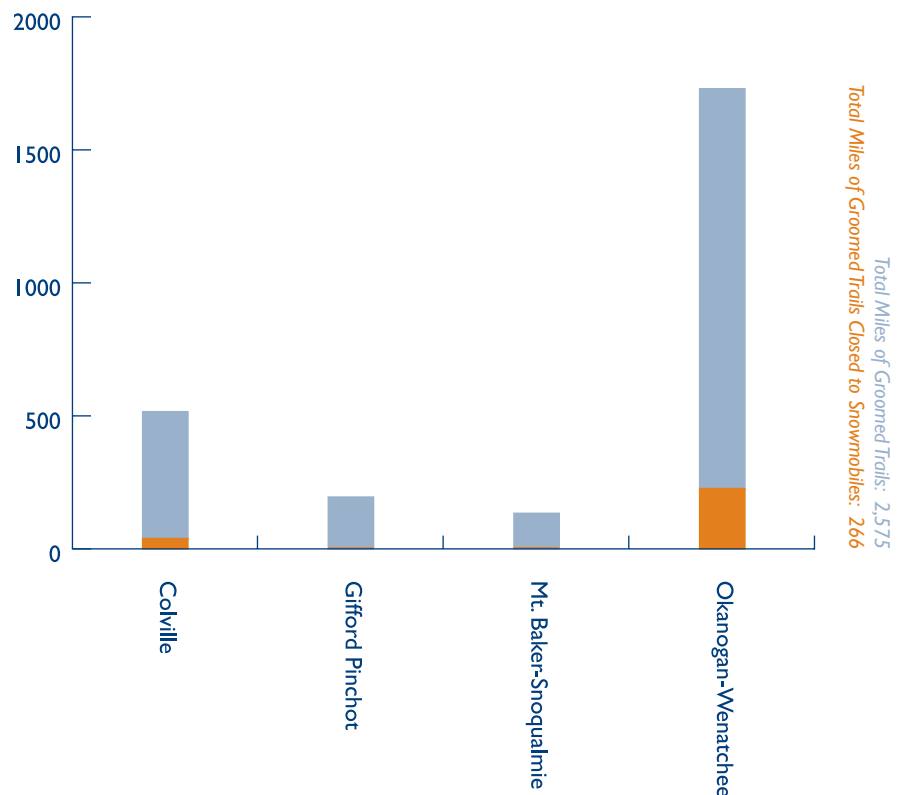
Washington has 1.1 million acres of non-wilderness non-motorized lands compared to 4.5 million acres that are open to snowmobiles. This results in a ratio of six non-motorized users to one motorized user per acre despite 50 percent more skier and snowshoer visits than snowmobile visits.

The Washington SCORP estimates, which are consistent with the NVUM survey participation numbers, estimate there are 112,942 cross-country skiers, 38,000 snowshoers, and 98,072 snowmobilers participating in the state.<sup>96</sup> Given the disparity between user numbers and the small percentage of trails closed to motorized use, it is not surprising that the state plan concludes that “growing demand is resulting in more reported crowding, increased specialization, increased user conflicts, and increased management actions to limit adverse impacts of access and activities.”<sup>97</sup>

**Table A: Total Miles of Groomed Winter Trails on National Forest Land Open and Closed to Snowmobiles**

See Appendix 3, pg. 38, for comparison of snowmobiles vs. skiers/snowshoers per mile of motorized and non-motorized trails.

- Miles of Groomed Trails Open to Snowmobiles
- Miles of Groomed Trails Closed to Snowmobiles

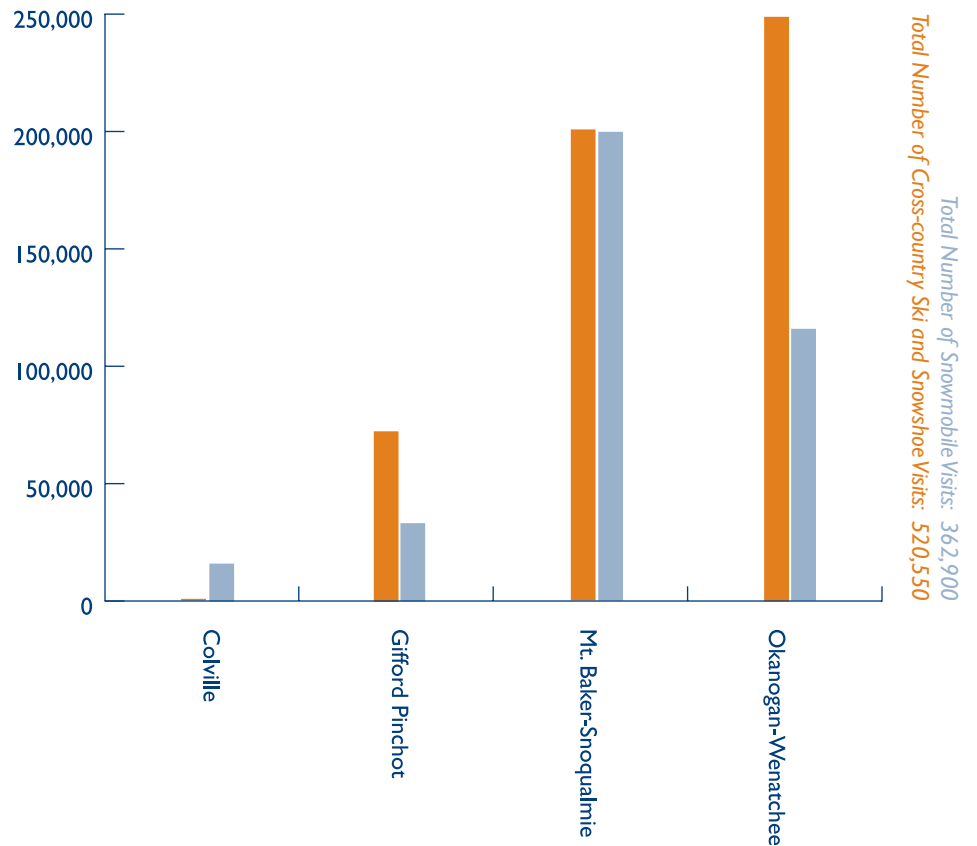


Olympic National Forest was not included in this report since it has no groomed miles and little data relating to winter motorized and non-motorized participation. Forests that are jointly administered supplied total acreages and miles for the combined

forests, yet the NVUM data is for each forest separately. Thus, to arrive at ratios of user numbers to miles and acres, the total visits for each forest were added together to determine a combined forest-wide percentage of users for each activity.

**Table B: National Forest Annual Visits per Activity**

Source: U.S. Government, National Visitor Use Monitoring data



**Table C: National Forest Acres Open and Closed to Snowmobiles**

