



### **Major win for the Colorado motorized recreational community as the Hermosa Watershed Legislation passes both House and Senate Committee Hearings**

The Hermosa Watershed legislation has now gained approval of both House and Senate Natural Resource Committees. **This is a major win for all motorized recreational users in Colorado.** This legislation will release the West Needles Wilderness Study area located between Durango and Silverton Colorado. This is an area with a long history of highly valued snowmobile usage, that would have been lost for future motorized recreational usage due to permanent closure by land managers. These closures were taking place over vigorous public objection. This legislation also Congressionally mandates that both grooming and open snowmobile riding must continue in the Molas Pass area that was released from its Wilderness Study Area classification. This protection is a major benefit to the winter economy of Silverton Colorado and surrounding communities as snowmobile recreation is now very close to being legally required in the area.

The Hermosa Watershed Legislation also designates an additional 70,000 acre Special Management Area (SMA) where motorized recreation must occur, also been Durango and Silverton CO. The creation of the SMA protects an important riding area for the OHV community in an area that has been proposed to be managed as Recommended Wilderness, identified in recent forest plans as possibly unsuitable for motorized usage and explored for possible designation as Wilderness in Legislation. The SMA protects an area where the single track motorcycle opportunities are frequently identified as world class. The scope of the SMA usage was also amended after last second boundary changes might have impacted 4x4 trails to be created. These trails are also within the scope of the SMA usage.

Final passage of the bill into law has not occurred but passing both committees is a major step towards its passage this session, and is the result of years of collaborative efforts. We thank both Senator Bennett and Representative Tipton's Offices, whose tireless efforts on these efforts have made these successes possible.