

Re: [External Email]Re: meeting in Vernal
Clif Koontz <cliftonkoontz@yahoo.com>
To:Christensen, Lars - FS, UT
Tue, Feb 7 at 6:55 PM

Lars- I appreciate the update. Jason Blankenagel will attend in person, but Mike Cook will actually attend remotely, presumably with video capability like I will have. It will be great to have your recreation staff officer there, and I encourage you to include any other members of the forest planning team.

My main topic of concern is Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) definitions and boundaries. The 1986 forest plan doesn't necessarily prohibit a motorized route from being in a non-motorized zone categorically, but the DEIS seems to do so with statements like "Motorized trails in areas classified as primitive or semiprimitive nonmotorized would conflict with the recreation settings." The DEIS also proposes non-motorized zones to cover at least half of the whole planning area, including non-motorized zones that stretch for ten or twenty miles, thereby isolating vast portions of the forest from connection by any kind of motor vehicle in summer.

ROS is a very useful planning tool, but it shouldn't massively constrain the options for a subsequent travel planning process to consider, particularly since forest plans are intended to last a couple decades (and sometimes wind up lasting twice that long). The counties have diligently developed trails master plans, yet the draft forest plan could prohibit many of those trails from ever being considered, as amending a forest plan for trail development is quite rare. Even in areas that lack a motorized trail proposed by the county, ROS zoning should allow for such a thing to be considered, except in instances where planners can demonstrate why such consideration should be preempted. Those instances would cover a lot less than half of the forest, particularly given the projection of motor vehicles in the coming decades, including electrification and hybridization with bicycling.

To achieve a true spectrum of opportunities for responsible recreation in practice, Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized zoning should explicitly allow exceptions for a motorized route, and most of the planning area should be zoned motorized. Some of your draft alternatives include ROS corridors for routes such as:

1. Dutch John Mountain and the area east of there,
2. Pipe Creek (to connect Greens Draw with the Flaming Gorge dam area),
3. Galloway Spring doubletrack (from Cow Hollow),
4. Heller Lake road (from Dry Gulch Creek to the dam of Heller Lake), and
5. top of Bad Land Cliffs north to Sowers Canyon and also northeast to Antelope Canyon.

These corridors are a nice start, but they simply don't go far enough to ensure that USFS travel planners will have ample options for the coming decades, so I urge your planning team to include more motorized zones and clearly allow for exceptions in non-motorized zones.

I look forward to hearing feedback from you and other USFS planners as well as local county perspectives in the morning. Thanks -Clif

Executive Director
Ride with Respect
435-259-8334 land
201-741-0361 cell

On Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 10:33:22 AM MST, Christensen, Lars - FS, UT
<lars.christensen@usda.gov> wrote:

Hello Clif,

Jason and Mike can meet me at the front desk at Ashley National Forest Supervisors Office at 355 North Vernal Ave. It is the larger building with the visitor parking in the front(east side) of the building.

Lars Christensen

Collaboration Specialist

Forest Plan Revision

Forest Service

Ashley National Forest

Office: 435-781-5126

Cell: 385-320-6274

lars.christensen@usda.gov

355 North Vernal Avenue
Vernal, UT 84078
www.fs.fed.us

Caring for the land and serving people