

Matt McCombs
Gunnison District Ranger
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RE: Forest Plan Comments

Matt:

My wife Janet and I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the development of a revised Forest Plan for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests. We have divided our input into two sections: one for the “big picture” categories, and one for supporting detail and examples.

Our major areas of concern for the revised Forest Plan are:

1. Management of dispersed camping
2. Management of off-highway roads and trails
3. Enforcement of all Forest Service rules and regulations

Dispersed Camping

As Tin Cup residents, we are very grateful to you and Scott Armentrout for implementing the dispersed camping restrictions in the south end of Taylor Park. We believe that these changes should be a permanent part of the revised Forest Plan. We, and most all of our neighbors in south Taylor Park, are ready to continue our volunteer work to ensure these restrictions are well marked and maintained. We also ask that the Forest Service continue the excellent local community communication process established by you and Mr. Armentrout.

Off-Highway Roads and Trails

The proliferation of OHV's, primarily ATV's, RZR's, etc., has brought a number of undesirable consequences. These include development of completely new and unauthorized trails, as well as braiding of existing trails – primarily to avoid obstacles, water, etc. Please take a look near the top of Tin Cup Pass on the Tin Cup side to see an excellent example of braiding completely out of control. Another example is Taylor Pass, where the ATV'ers have developed a completely new and parallel trail to the existing road in and along the creek. This action borders on criminal. Signage and other provisions should be made to keep all traffic on existing roads and trails. If the road is too rough, steep, or otherwise challenging for some drivers/riders/vehicles, then those individuals need to go elsewhere. For example, in the San Rafael Swell area of Utah, signs inform visitors that they need to be prepared for all current challenges – without modification or changes in alignment to the EXISTING trail. All roads and trails need to be adequately marked so that the traveling public can determine the correct route. In addition, all high elevation passes should be closed until snow has melted from the EXISTING routes, preventing development of new routes around snowdrifts, etc.

Enforcement of Rules and Regulations

The Taylor Park area has a reputation – right or wrong – for minimal enforcement of existing rules and regulations, in other words – “where anything goes”. This has to change. A few well documented and publicized citations will go a long way to start a new paradigm. We understand the argument of “limited resources” when it comes to enforcement. However, visitors need to understand that they will be held accountable for their actions when they visit our National Forests.

As you know, generic Forest Service speed limits are established for certain types of roads. For the road between Tin Cup and the Taylor Park Trading Post, the applicable limit is 40 miles per hour. This limit should be prominently posted along the road, and additional, LARGE PRINT speed limit notices should be placed in all appropriate Forest Service kiosks, etc.

Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss further. Once again, we appreciate the opportunity to comment, and we look forward to additional communications throughout the development of the revised Forest Plan.

Sincerely,




Joe and Janet Grenawalt

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