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Mike Pritchard

December 21, 2018

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c/o Christopher McDonald

PO Box 309

Carbondale, CO 81623

(Submitted electronically at: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=55031>)**RE: RFMBA's Comments on Basalt Mountain Salvage Rehabilitation Project.**

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association (RFMBA), a Chapter of the International Mountain Bicycling Association. RFMBA appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on this Notice of Proposed Action. We are pleased to participate in the process of determining appropriate management actions for the lands impacted by the Lake Christine Fire.

RFMBA, a Chapter of the International Mountain Bicycling Association, is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

Hazard Tree Removal

RFMBA appreciates that removing roadside hazard trees along Cattle Creek Rd. and Basalt Mt. Road is critical for long term safety and public access. Both of these routes are essential for recreational use of other areas singletrack routes.

Salvage Tree Removal & Tree Planting

RFMBA appreciates that this action, proposed for approximately 2,228 acres of forested vegetation, would be analyzed and implemented using current best practices, including leaving islands of unburned trees as seed source and wildlife cover. We also appreciate that appropriate tree planting would occur in the years following salvage / harvest of trees in the event that the forest has not recovered to minimum standards within 5 years.

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Our main concern during salvage / harvest operations is the potential for conflicts between recreation uses and commercial activities necessary to implement the plan. We encourage the WRNF to develop hours of operation for these activities that prohibit commercial operations before 7am and after 5pm on weekdays, with all commercial operations prohibited on weekend days.

Trails Used as Temporary Roads

RFMBA understands that Mill Creek Rim (524.1A), also known as the western end of the Basalt Mountain Trail, will be improved for use as a temporary road for treatment areas. We don't foresee a high quality outcome from the proposal to obliterate the temporary road and restore the original trail width within the original route's corridor. As such, for this particular route, we propose that at the conclusion of work within the treatment areas, the original route be fully obliterated and rehabilitated such that the original route can be replaced with a new trail located approximately 1/4 mile to the north.

This proposal, **as illustrated on the attached map**, would act as a re-route of routes 524.1A and 1911.1. Those two numbered routes, also known as Mill Creek Rim & Basalt Mountain Trail would be fully obliterated and rehabilitated. The concept reroute alignment shown on the map would align the new shared use route (open to foot, horse, and bike use, just like the existing routes) along the topographic edge of what's known as the actual Mill Creek Rim. This alignment, which includes western and eastern segments, would provide high quality long range views of the mountains and landscape to the north, assuming the salvage operations open view planes not possible prior to the Lake Christine Fire. The new improved trail alignment would be a benefit to trail users who frequent "the Big Loop" which includes a descent of the Cattle Creek Trail located to the northeast. RFMBA commits to working with local partners to fund and implement the new trail alignments at the direction of the WRNF. It is assumed that timing of this project's implementation would be based on coordination and timing of the surrounding treatment activities.

Feel free to contact me with any questions. If you ever have any questions or ideas about our regional trails or our mission, please contact me at (970) 948-3486 or mike.pritchard@rfmba.org.

Best Regards,

Mike Pritchard, Executive Director

