



March 20, 2020

Aspen-Sopris Ranger District  
PO Box 309  
Carbondale, CO 81623  
*Submitted Electronically*

Dear Forest Service Staff,

On behalf of the Colorado Mountain Club and, in particular, our members in the CMC Roaring Fork group, I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed trail from Redstone to McClure Pass. While we generally support the development of new, sustainable non-motorized trails that do not conflict with surrounding natural resources, we have some uncertainties about this proposal.

We have some concerns about whether a soft-surface trail will really meet the needs expressed by the local community. Many of our local members see the value in a hard-surface route to allow pedestrians and road bikers access off the highway. This might also be achieved by widening the existing roadway without disturbing additional habitat. We recommend the forest service and county conduct a more comprehensive community survey to understand the demand for this trail and carefully weigh that with the potential environmental impacts.

From the maps in the scoping document, it does not appear that the proposed trail would connect with other existing trail networks, except perhaps coal creek, so it is unclear what this alignment achieves. Rather than creating loop opportunities, it would likely be used as a downhill trail by mountain bikers, with shuttle access from the road. This would impact and potentially displace other potential users, including hikers and equestrians and should be evaluated carefully in the assessment.

While much of the trail is aligned in close proximity to the highway (where habitat and resource damage already exist), there are segments located on the opposite side of the Crystal River that should be analyzed carefully for wildlife impacts. Disturbance on the West side of the river where there is none currently could impact riparian habitats and further restrict wildlife access to the river. Additionally proposed the width of the trail is quite large and will require more maintenance than a single-track trail. The environmental assessment should assess the need for and impact of a wider trail and include a plan to pay for the future maintenance costs.

We hope the forest will carefully consider these impacts in their assessment process. Many thanks for your consideration,

Julie Mach  
CMC Conservation Director

Mike Miller  
CMC Roaring Fork Group Chair