Dawn Hoselton

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Columbine Ranger District

Southern HD’S Landscape Restoration Project

Attn: District Ranger James Simino

I am writing to comment on the proposed OHV trail that is part of the Southern HD’s Restoration Project. I am an avid horseback rider in the HD mountains and have seen a vast increase in the motorized vehicles since the area was put on the trail maps in the last ten years. I have had several run-in with high speed motor cycle riders who did not watch out for other people on the trails and have also seen the lack of durability on the non-motorized signs leading to the falling apart of the signs altogether and thus motorized vehicles not knowing where to drive and often being off designated trails or in the forest when it is closed.

While I am a realist and understand that this road will probably go through even though this area is the main non-motorized area of the HD and thus a great quiet place for wildlife and to ride and hike, I would like to point out several safety issues and inconsistencies on the forest service’s treatment of current OHV trails that take off from CR 523, which should be fixed if the current project is approved.

1. The main gate does not restrict 4- Wheelers to the legal trail width and I often see much wider vehicles on the trail.
   1. Solution- Fix the gate to only be legal width and lock it in off season. Have an equestrian and pedestrian entrance open year-round.
   2. Fix the decrepit fence along the existing road to block 4 wheelers from going around the gate.
2. Non- motorized /trail closed signs have fallen down or were only put up on one section of the trail and not on the other side of trail if it is a loop.
   1. Solution- put better signs up that are actually dug into the ground and made out of durable material. Make sure signs are on both sides of trail if it is a loop.
3. New OHV trail will encourage motorized vehicles to make a loop between Saul’s creek and the entrance off CR 523. CR 523 is almost a one-lane road due to overgrowth of oak brush and the increase motor travel of motor bikes on county roads etc will make this very dangerous.
   1. Solution A- widen CR 523 or cut back the oak brush along CR 523 and make sure that a “loop option” is not encouraged-although riders will figure it out quickly.
   2. Solution B- do not let this be a motorized trail and leave it as a fire break and emergency purpose only for motorized vehicles and/or only open to equestrian riders and pedestrians.

Looking at the safety concerns and the impact motorized traffic would have on the secluded area of the HD’s where the road is proposed, I strongly suggest that the road, if put in, remains an emergency motorized use only and not become a new OHV trail. Thank you for considering my concerns and I hope that an ecosystem friendly and realistic solution can be reached.

Sincerely,

Dawn Hoselton