

Jeanne L Williams

October 6, 2020



Columbine Ranger District
Attn: District Ranger James Simino
P.O. Box 439
367 S. Pearl Street
Bayfield, CO 81122

Reference: Southern HD's Landscape Restoration Project 58742

Dear Sir:

The purpose of this letter is to submit public comment regarding the HD Restoration Project 58742. I am a landowner and resident [REDACTED] whose residence is located [REDACTED] My property and residence is located [REDACTED]

Our government provides for departments to serve, safeguard and inform its citizens. The recent politicizing of these organizations, such as the EPA and CDC, has resulted in an almost total loss of credibility. The U.S. Forest Service has been charged to manage and protect public lands. The prolonged drought in SW Colorado, which shows no signs of abating, is already adversely affecting habitat and stressing wildlife, which in this area includes elk, mule-tail deer, bears, mountain lions and wild turkeys to name a few.

Opening the Armstrong/Long Canyon fire line to motorized traffic will only exacerbate the difficulties currently facing these species. Recognizing the ravages of climate change, which will only worsen, it is essential to plan with not only the immediate future in mind, but also the far-reaching future. It is your responsibility to safeguard the forests and wildlife for generations not yet born.

Currently this area is utilized by hikers and horseback riders. Allowing motorized vehicles not only changes the tenor of the experience, but has proven to be incompatible. There have been numerous instances along Ute Creek Trail 666 that is heavily used by hikers and horseback riders, when dirt bikes or ATVs have come careening down the trail with no regard to any others utilizing it. On one occasion, a horseback rider was bucked off when a dirt bike came charging down the middle of the trail.

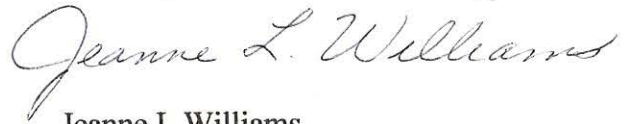
The Ute Creek trail also provides ample evidence of dirt bikes and ATVs driving off trail to either circumvent ruts, take shortcuts, or simply travel off trail. Having hiked extensively in the HDs under consideration, I can attest to numerous gullies and open meadows that would present tempting opportunities for individuals who do not respect the rules. Also, there is no feasible way for this area to be patrolled to prevent unauthorized access.

Noise is another consideration. Putting in an off-road track for dirt bikes and ATVs adjacent to a housing development would not be allowed. The proposed fire line runs adjacent to 8 residences that parallel the SJNF/private land boundary. The quiet conditions (20dbA) and acoustics in the valley adjacent to the proposed trail transfers sound for several miles. The noise from these vehicles would be intolerable not only to the nearest 8 residences but also to 5 other residences just north of the fire line.

It is necessary to look beyond the current political climate and provide the services with which you have been charged for the long term. Your responsibility is to the forests, wildlife, and the general public to whom you are accountable; not special interest groups such as oil and gas interests, many of which are not based in Colorado, or a limited group of people whose actions would have an irreparable impact on this area. You are caretakers, so please perform your duties and take care of the fragile ecosystems under your purview.

Thank you for taking into account these heart felt concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanne L. Williams". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jeanne L Williams