

Maureen C O'Donnell

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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 understand the need for a fire line that will extend from Ritter Canyon to Saul's Creek, but, I am opposed to OHV use of the trail.

As a resident of [REDACTED] for the past 11 years, I have seen increase of traffic on CR 525, which is a narrow road used by children on bicycles, walkers and horseback riders alike. There are many who use the road as access to the HD's and drive very fast on the road. There is little parking at the end of the road to accommodate vehicles with trailers. CR 525 would need to be upgraded, widened, speed limit signs, equestrian signs and children signs posted to make drivers aware of other uses.

Also, as an avid horseback rider, I have come across motorcycles who venture off the trails, causing damage to the fragile environment and scaring horses and riders alike. The forest is rich in turkeys, deer and elk and the construction of a road that allows OHV use will impact seasonal trails used by wildlife that live in this forest.

The entrance to the trail, off the school bus turnaround, has a gate that is not correct in size to accommodate limited use and the fence along the trail has been down for years, allowing large 4 wheelers to access the trails. Many of the signs posting designated limited use, are fallen down and totally inadequate as far as being seen. Many are propped up with rocks which only hold up for a day or two. As far as the status quo, more signs designating trail use need to be posted at each end of a loop trail using posts that are durable and can withstand the elements, such as sunken wood or t-posts.

If the designated fire lane is constructed, I ask that the trail be closed to vehicles allowing access to hikers and equestrians. There is a part of the forest that abuts [REDACTED]'s land, at the east end of Armstrong Canyon, that is part of the designated road-less area, instituted during the Clinton Administration. That needs to be considered and investigated.

Thank You for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
Maureen C O'Donnell