

POSTMARKED 10/9/20

October 9, 2020

Columbine Ranger District
Southern HD's Landscape Restoration Project
Attn: District Ranger James Simino
PO Box 439
367 S. Pearl St.
Bayfield, CO 81122



Dear District Ranger Simino,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the proposed SOUTHERN HD'S LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PROJECT. As a property owner and part year resident in the immediate area of the project, we are also frequent users of the forest area. I feel the project will have significant benefit to myself and others for the reason the newsletter mentions. Including:

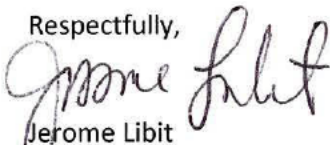
- Creating a fire break that helps protects property, wildlife, lives, and the natural beauty of the area.
- Decreases the potential cost of fighting a future wildfire to that and surrounding areas.
- Significantly increases human access to enjoy these natural areas by interconnecting the trail system of the Saul's Creek area with that accessible off CO Rd 525.
- Provides access to managed harvesting of timber for appropriate local and commercial uses.

Myself and my family are very active users of the Saul's Creek trail system for OHV riding, hiking and bicycle riding. Connecting the two trail areas would help us and area residents by potentially doubling the available trail network. Currently it is difficult to utilize the trails off CO Rd 525. Unless you are a resident adjacent to the system, it requires having a trailer for OHV or horseback riding access. Even if using that system of trails for bike riding or hiking, parking is very limited and an inconvenience to residents near that trailhead.

The OHV trails at either end of the proposed trail offer rides of longer length, approximately 20 miles each, and as the crow flies are only about a mile apart. I am not aware of any significant environmental issues associated with these trails. The proposed trail is relatively short in length – only 5 miles long – so there would be minimal incremental impact, if any, to the environment. OHV Trails in the Rio Grande National Forest north of Pagosa Springs are substantially longer – one is almost 80 miles long.

For these reasons we strongly support the proposed Forest Service project, especially the new OHV route interconnecting the two trail systems. Thank you for your time and consideration of our input on the proposed project.

Respectfully,


Jerome Libit