

November 4, 2019

www.douglas.co.us

US Forest Service
2840 Kachina Drive
Pueblo, CO 81008

Re: Comments on the Pike/San Isabel MVUM

To Whom it May Concern:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input into the Pike/San Isabel Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) EIS. Douglas County Government would like to make the following comments and requests in the interest of our citizens and partner agencies.

Alternatives: Douglas County would support either Alternative A or C with a few changes. We feel these alternatives maintain the access we would prefer to see in the Pike National Forest. We are opposed to alternatives B, D and E as they close many of the routes upon which our citizens depend.

FS TRL 677: We would like to see FS TRL 677 between Trail 770 and Rampart Range Rd. remain open as either open to all motor vehicles or at least as an administrative road. Our main reason for this request is that there are a high number of injury accidents on the single-track motorized Trail 770. Douglas County Search and Rescue (SAR) uses this trail frequently to access Trail 770 to recover and treat crash victims. 677 is the only TRL access in the vicinity of Trail 770 allowing for ATV rescue response. If TRL 677 is open the whole length depicted on the map, TRL 157 is not necessary. If TRL 677 does not continue, it will be important to keep TRL 157 open.

FS TRL 514: Similarly, FS TRL 514 provides Search and Rescue and emergency response to the Front Range Trail. We request that any changes to 514 provide ATV access for emergency response/SAR.

FS RD 327: FS RD 327 is designated as completely or partially closed and decommissioned in several of the alternatives. Douglas County request you leave this road open for full access along its entire length. We requested the same in our response letters to the Travel Management Plan update in both 2010 and 2011. We have multiple reasons for this request. These reasons are:

- **Fuels Mitigation/Forest Health Management:** Please see the attached map showing the alignment of Rampart Range Rd. and FS RD 327. RD. 327 extends into the heart of a large swath of forest at extreme and high fire danger risk. The District Rangers have expressed intent to begin treatments in this area soon. RD 327 could be very useful in thinning operations. Douglas County and the communities of Valley Park, Woodmoor Mountain and Perry Park all have Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). The area covered by all these plans abuts the National Forest. Collaboration on fuels treatment would be most appreciated.
- **Emergency Response:** There have been many calls for rescue in this area over the years. The Larkspur Fire District uses RD 327 for SAR operations frequently. Some years back, a pilot flew into the mountain at night. The US Forest Service used RD 327 to bring in Tenders & Brush Trucks to fight the subsequent fire. Larkspur Fire used RD 327 to extricate the deceased pilot. The Fire Marshal said without the use of RD 327, extrication would have been exceedingly difficult.

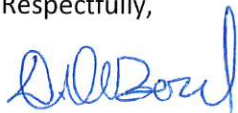
- Trail connections: Douglas County recently acquired the Sandstone Ranch as a County Open Space parcel. Douglas County has an active application to the Pikes Peak District for two non-motorized trails from the 2030-acre Sandstone Ranch connecting to FS RD 327. We have been working with various District Rangers for years to gain public access along the eastern edge of the Pike National Forest where there is currently very little. Historically, Trail 627 ran from RD 327 down to the private property at Sandstone Ranch. Trail 627 was designated on the Pike National Forest Map two iterations back. Please see the clip of this older map. Douglas County is hoping to reestablish trail access in an improved, more sensitive alignment.
- Recreational and Hunting Access: this portion of the Pike offers over 30,000 acres of roadless area that is otherwise inaccessible except on foot or horseback. The terrain is very steep along the eastern edge of the forest making hunting almost impractical. Road access off RD 327 makes hunting portions of this area feasible and makes retrieving game possible. Hunting access would allow a form of recreation lacking in this area, offer a chance to thin ungulate herds and could help to de-habituate problem bears and lions that frequent the adjacent communities of Woodmoor Mountain, Valley Park and Perry Park.

Seasonal Closures: There are new proposed seasonal closures on many of the motorized roads and trails in the vicinity of North Rampart Range Rd. (Trails 300, 502, 507, and 563). The dates of these closures were not released. Douglas County would like to know the dates and parameters of these closures before supporting them. This area is a highly used portion of the national forest system. Closures could impede Search and Rescue response, general recreational access as well as the fall big game hunts and the winter & spring mountain lion and turkey hunts, respectively. Rampart Range Rd. has been closed frequently during some of these seasons in the past limiting access for certain user groups. We would like to see the dates of proposed permanent closure on Rampart Range, Dakan, Jackson Creek and other roads in this area before agreeing with these closures. Douglas County has invested significant effort and money into the upkeep of some of these roads and construction of a parking area on Dakan Rd.

County Collaboration: Douglas County has a history of partnering with the US Forest Service in a number of ways. Road maintenance is one of those ways. The County is willing to consider assisting with improvements or maintenance on FS RD 327 & & TRL 677 if that would help swing the decision in favor of keeping these routes open.

Once again, we thank you for the opportunity for comment on the MVUM alternatives. Thank you in advance for your consideration of these comments and requests.

Respectfully,

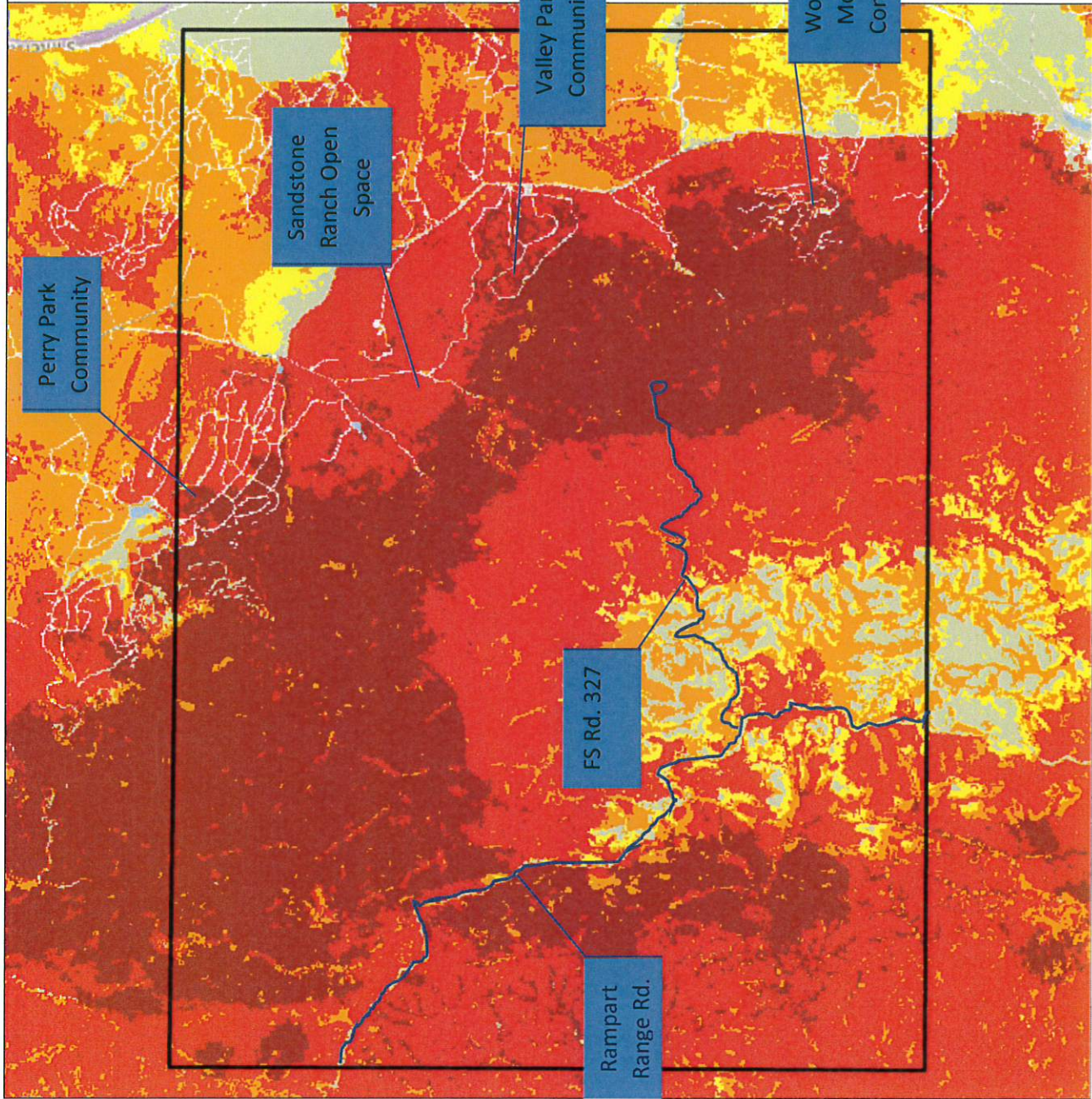


Doug DeBord
County Manager

Wildfire Risk Map, Western
Douglas County

Wildfire Risk

- Non-Burnable
- Lowest Risk
- Low Risk
- Moderate Risk
- High Risk
- Highest Risk



Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment
<http://www.coloradowildfirerisk.com>