

To Whom it May Concern,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I was raised in the Crystal River Valley and have spent much time hiking and enjoying the area that is being discussed in this project. It is a gorgeous location, with beautiful creeks, massive trees, and wildlife scouring the area. It can be understood why people would like to make it more accessible and allow the masses to enjoy this little slice of reality. But, as with everything, with every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. This area currently sees very little human traffic and is one of the few spots in the valley that has not seen massive effects from the influx of new residents in the area.

I would like to raise my concerns regarding the proposed development along the Redstone-McClure segment. Below are several items that I want to address.

1. This area should not be utilized for biking. I am an avid biker and I enjoy new trails as much as anyone. However, I understand that there are tradeoffs to these trails, and that trail development must be regulated. Just as our local communities do not encourage sprawling residential developments - especially Pitkin County - it must be understood that these trails are nonetheless development. The environmental impacts are less obvious than subdivisions full of homes, but that does not make them any less real. As we are encouraging high density of towns and homes, we must also encourage high density of mountain bike trails. This trail has potential to create a domino effect and would encourage additional use of existing trails (including several existing bandit trails on McClure Pass) as well as increase likeliness for future bandit as well as legally developed trails. Given the opportunities within already developed trail networks, as well as the lack of maintenance of our existing recreational infrastructure, It would be much less impactful to use the resources being thrown at this project for existing conditions. From repairs to the installation of one-way bike trails to increase capacity, existing trails could be improved upon in progressive ways. If a trail connecting Redstone to McClure is considered necessary, keep it along the road where the impacts would decrease dramatically.
2. I do agree that these areas do need to have seasonal closures for wildlife. However, there are contradicting results from these closures, and they are highly dependent on enforcement. Given the remoteness of the Crystal Valley and its proximity from aspen where the enforcement would be based, it is very likely that this would not be adequately patrolled. Many citizens in Marble and Redstone do not feel like they are recognized by Pitkin County in many ways and have resentment towards their jurisdiction – why would they listen to a sign? If this trail moves forward, these closures need to be enforced with cameras and strict repercussions. Also, additional studies must be performed regarding the increase in use and if it outweighs the benefits of a seasonal closure.
3. This trail will dramatically increase the number of dogs affecting the area. Given our society's negligence towards the impacts their dog has on nature as well as the lack of enforcement of laws regarding leashes, it can be assumed dogs will highly impact wildlife. It is understood there are existing trails that this already occurs on but developing them further will increase use and consequently increase impacts. Again, this trail is dependent on extensive enforcement of laws and regulations to adequately provide what is proposed in this study.

It is important to recognize that recent wildlife studies have concluded terrifying results regarding the impacts humans have on wildlife. It has been acknowledged throughout this process that by segmentizing this trail development from Carbondale to Crested Butte, smaller and less significant

analyses circumvent the need for a complete environmental impact statement. A comprehensive environmental review must be provided for this trail to be able to assess the entirety of this complex development. To not require the adequate studies and proper public engagement for this development process does not meet the integrity of Pitkin County or the USFS. Our wildlife should be prioritized over recreation. I would happily keep riding the extensive miles of trails that we already have knowing that we left this space for the animals that truly belong there.

Thank you,

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