

Shoshone National Forest Travel Management
Proposal Form

Wapiti Ranger District

NOV 04 2015

Ranger District:

New Proposals

1. What is the proposal? (loop; additional route; closures; seasonal restrictions; reconstruction; maintenance, etc.)

- 1) CLOSE ALL DISTURBED camping along Sunlight Rd
2) Little Sunlight campground + lot across street for tent campers & horse men only
3) Improve Gas Ck. campground 101T (2 101V) w/ bathrooms [outhouses], Bear boxes, group sites, road improvements for ATV users, campers, motor homes - up to 25-30 sites available
2. Where is the proposal located?

Sunlight Valley 101T, 101V

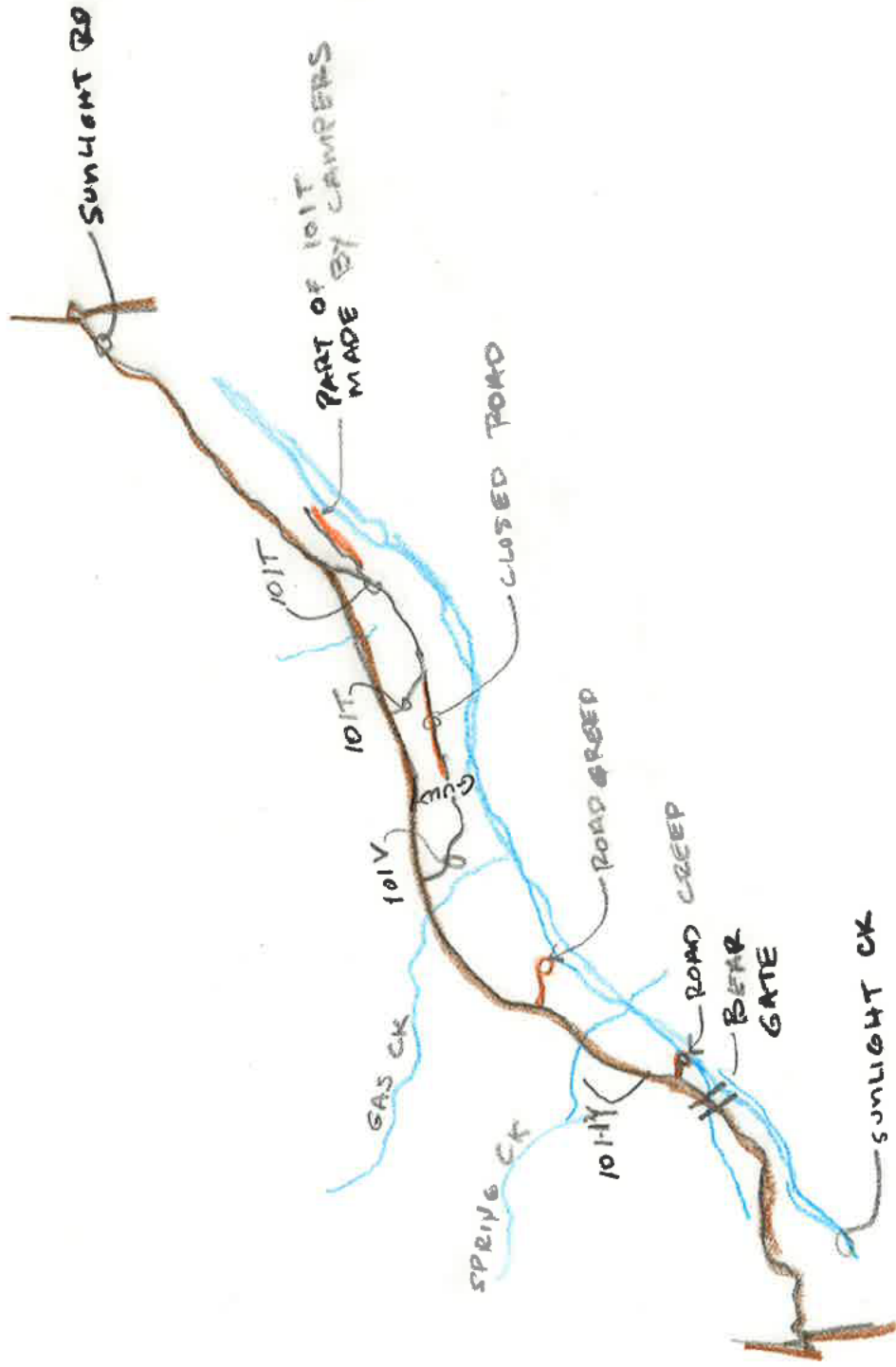
- 4) Beem Gulch either improved w/seasonal Bear closures or closed to camping due to Bears

3. What is the reason for your proposal? (continue on back)

see letter enclosed & Map.

MAP OF GAS CK CAMP GROUND AREA
EXISTING ROADS - LEGAL & ILLEGAL

SCALE 1:24,000



October 3, 15

Sue Stresser, District Ranger Wapiti/Clark's Fork/Greybull Ranger Districts
Shoshone National Forest
203A Yellowstone Ave.
Cody, WY 82414

Dear Ms. Stresser,

I spent some time inspecting the 'existing' Gas Creek campground and I have some comments relative to the proposed ATV campground across from Little Sunlight. This is what I feel is a practical alternative proposal that address the needs of the Backcountry Horsemen, campers, ATVers and trailers.

This letter will clarify exactly my proposal after speaking with several other residents in Sunlight as well as the BackCountry Horsemen. As stated in a previous letter, ATV and camper traffic along Sunlight Rd. has increased dramatically in the last 5 years, and in the last year has doubled from the year before! Those of us who live here are concerned about the increased traffic.

My Proposal:

1. Eliminate all dispersed camping along Sunlight Rd up to the Bear Gate. Dispersed camping would be allowed seasonally beyond the bear gate.
2. Little Sunlight Campground would be tent and horse camping only. The dirt area across from the existing Little Sunlight Campground by Sunlight Creek would be for overflow horse trailer use and light campers only.
3. All group, ATV, and additional tent campers would have to camp at the Gas Creek Campground up Sunlight Rd. (Camping would still be allowed at the WG&F campground as well as FS dispersed camping off WG&F roads up East/West Painter and Trail Creek.)
4. Gas Creek campground includes existing loops 101T and 101V. Upon inspection of 101T and 101V, here is what I found. **(See my map for clarification)**
 - a. Campers have made a short access road on the east end of 101T that is not on the existing 2010 Motor Vehicle Use map. There are 5-

6 existing campsites there now with fire rings and room for more. The access road is terrible and needs to be fixed with new gravel as it is muddy and easy to get stuck in.

- b. On the legal 101T loop, there are now at least 7 user created fire-ring existing campsites and room for many more. Between this entire loop as well as the additional east road stated above in (a), there are about 13 existing primitive campsites and room for at least a dozen more depending upon FS regulations. The 101T loop is deeply rutted and in poor condition and needs repair.
 - c. 101T loop also has room for several group campsites on the north side of the access road.
 - d. At least 2-3 outhouses are needed. All areas need bear boxes as there are none there at present. The entire camping area needs designated camp sites. Right now people are just pulling in where they can and making primitive camps.
 - e. 101T is a potentially excellent campground with access to Sunlight Creek, good tree cover and meadows. Bear boxes and outhouse with safety fire rings are needed. I believe 101T could hold as many as 25-30 campsites with 1 or 2 group sites.
 - f. There is a user created access road that runs west from 101T ending in a gully across from the end of 101V. This road has been blocked off by FS. This road should be kept blocked off and can be a pleasant walk for campers and children.
 - g. 101V right now is just an old logging road. There are several user made camp sites. 101V has potential for at least 9-10 good campsites. This road is in better condition than 101T as it is on higher ground. There are sites for potential group campgrounds there as well. This could be developed later if 101T becomes too crowded. No bear boxes or outhouse there now.
5. There are two distinct places of Road Creep past 101V on the east side of Sunlight Rd. before the bear gate. These both end in loops where people have camped. Either these should be official campsites, or retired as dispersed camping is eliminated.

6. Lastly 101 1Y is an old logging road right before the bear gate. The road is narrow, overgrown, rutted and ends at a narrow Spring Creek turn around. There is only one area that camping takes place here, a meadow on the west side of 101 1Y. This road should be closed to camping.
7. Lastly, dispersed camping at Beem Gulch needs to be considered here. Although it is not on Sunlight Creek, and way off Sunlight Rd., this area is heavily used grizzly bear habitat in spring and fall. The Beem Gulch tees at Holdings fenceline, and the right fork ends in a heavily used campsite. In addition, trailers and hunters use a few pullout areas below along this road. These fire rings are always dirty. I've cleaned them many times. There are no bear boxes and I've seen a sow with cubs there every spring and fall. Either seasonally close this to camping and add bear boxes, or eliminate all dispersed camping here.

Besides the traffic, Sunlight is in the PCA and prime grizzly habitat. A policy of non-dispersed camping would allow for:

1. Camping would be centralized so that the Forest Service could easily control food rewards by placing bear boxes. In addition, policing would be easier.
2. Clean outhouses have become essential with so much use.
3. Less conflict with bears and other wildlife, allowing them more room to move through corridors undisturbed

Sincerely,



Leslie Patten, [REDACTED]