



BlueRibbon Coalition
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Ben Burr, Executive Director
BlueRibbon Coalition
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June 29, 2022

Terry De Lay, District Ranger
Escalante Ranger District
P.O. Box 246
Escalante, UT 84726

Dear Mr. De Lay,

BlueRibbon Coalition/ShareTrails (BRC) is writing to provide feedback for the Lower Box Trailhead Parking Project. BRC is a national non-profit organization that champions responsible recreation and encourages a strong conservation ethic and individual stewardship. We champion responsible use of public lands and waters for the benefit of all recreationists by educating and empowering our members to secure, protect, and expand shared outdoor recreation access and use by working collaboratively with natural resource managers and other recreationists. Our members use motorized and non-motorized means of recreation, including OHVs, horses, mountain bikes, and hiking to enjoy federally managed lands throughout the United States, including those of the Forest Service. Many of our members and supporters live in Utah or travel across the country to visit Utah and use motorized vehicles to access Forest Service managed lands throughout Utah. BRC members visit these areas for motorized recreation, hiking, sightseeing, photography, hunting, wildlife and nature study, camping, water sports, and other similar pursuits. We would like to add our support to any comment submitted by any other individuals or organizations that advocate for motorized use and increased recreation access overall. BRC members and supporters have concrete, definite, and

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immediate plans to continue such activities in the future.

Roads and Trails

BRC supports creating better trailheads as long as it accommodates the needs of all users. We commend the Forest Service on this project for working to accommodate the increase of use rather than implementing closures. The creation of the trailheads should not limit motorized use because that would favor one user group over another. This land should benefit as many users as possible. All users can be accommodated through proper education or alternative management techniques. If any recreational use needs to be temporarily closed for the completion of the project, those areas and activities should be opened as soon as possible. We would also like to note that this type of project is an appropriate use of categorical exclusions.

Economic Benefits

Local communities rely on recreation for economic opportunities. There has been a surge of use throughout the nation on public lands as well as in the Escalante area. Local groups have worked hard to put the area on the map so that they could reap the economic benefits. Closing any roads or areas to recreation even temporarily does hinder economic opportunity and the USFS should be sensitive to this.

Conclusion

We would like to close by saying we support “shared use”. As long as overall visitation numbers are appropriate for the affected resources, motorized and non-motorized users can be compatible with one another so long as individual users understand designations and plan their activities accordingly. Indeed, motorized and nonmotorized recreation use often overlap as OHV’s often increase accessibility to non-motorized recreational activities such as hiking, camping, equestrian use, etc. We also hold that responsible recreational use of public lands can exist in harmony with ecosystem needs.

BRC would like to be considered an interested public for this project. Information can be sent to the following address and email address:

Ben Burr
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P.O. Box 5449
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brmedia@sharetrails.org

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Sincerely,

A stylized handwritten signature consisting of two large, bold, cursive 'B's followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ben Burr
Executive Director
BlueRibbon Coalition

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Simone Griffin'.

Simone Griffin
Policy Director
BlueRibbon Coalition