



BlueRibbon Coalition
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Ben Burr, Executive Director

June 20, 2023

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Black Hills National Forest
Forest Supervisor's Office
Elysia Retzlaff, Project Manager
1019 N 5th Street
Custer, South Dakota 57730

Dear Ms. Retzlaff,

BlueRibbon Coalition (BRC) is writing to provide feedback for the Rapid Creek Watershed Withdrawal. 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 Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service. Many of our members and supporters live in South Dakota or travel across the country to visit South Dakota and use motorized vehicles to access BLM and Forest Service managed lands throughout South Dakota. 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

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members and supporters have concrete, definite, and immediate plans to continue such activities in the future.

This is a popular area for various forms of recreation such as off-roading, boating, camping and other forms of exploration. BlueRibbon does not support closure or loss of access for users for recreational purposes. Although it is stated that this withdrawal will not affect recreation oftentimes, recreation experiences a loss if roads and routes are closed or limited. Roads and routes should not be closed as a result of this withdrawal and could be an unintentional result. The BLM and USFS should include language in the EA ensuring that no roads will be closed or restricted to public users within the entire project area of 20,574 acres during the entirety of the withdrawal period.

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
BlueRibbon Coalition
P.O. Box 5449
Pocatello, ID 83202
brmedia@sharetrails.org

Sincerely,



Ben Burr
Executive Director
BlueRibbon Coalition



Simone Griffin
Policy Director
BlueRibbon Coalition

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