



October 31, 2024

Samuel Massman
Acting District Ranger
Dillon Ranger District
680 Blue River Parkway
P.O. Box 620
Silverthorne, CO 80498

Submitted online at <https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?Project=66332>

Re: Jones Gulch Area Closure #66332

Dear Acting District Ranger Massman,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Jones Gulch area closure. Winter Wildlands Alliance (WWA) is a national advocacy organization with 16,000 supporters nationwide, representing the interests of human-powered winter recreationists across the U.S. We work to inspire and empower people to protect America's wild snowscapes. Our grassroots network of 33 groups works across 15 states, including in Colorado. Many of our members and supporters ski and snowshoe on the Dillon Ranger District.

Winter Wildlands Alliance supports protecting wildlife habitat from human impact when doing so is necessary for the health and continued viability of a population. As such, we support the proposed action to prohibit human occupancy and use within the Jones Gulch drainage annually from November 1st to April 30th for the protection of important winter habitat and travel connectivity for Canada lynx. However, we also ask that the Dillon Ranger District consider how the cumulative impact of ski resort expansions across the District has impacted lynx and take this into consideration when future expansion requests arise. Not only do ski resort expansions reduce habitat availability, these expansions displace backcountry skiers into previously less-frequently traveled terrain. Participation in backcountry skiing is growing at a much faster rate than resort skiing, therefore, it is important for the Forest Service to consider the cascading effects from ski resort expansions onto other forms of recreation and resulting increases in recreation/wildlife conflict so as to avoid requiring additional public land closures in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hilary Eisen".

Hilary Eisen
Policy Director

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