



## Rampart Range Motorized Management Committee

P.O. Box 3511  
Englewood, CO 80155  
[info@rampartrange.org](mailto:info@rampartrange.org)

December 4, 2024

Ryan Nehl, Forest and Grassland Supervisor  
c/o Amber Wyndham,  
2840 Kachina Drive  
Pueblo, CO 81008

RE: Lower North-South Vegetation Management Plan

Dear Sir:

With this letter, Rampart Range Motorized Management Committee (RRMMC) is providing comments to the Lower North-South Vegetation Management Plan, Draft Environmental Assessment. RRMMC is an all-volunteer, 501c3 non-profit service organization that provides subcontractors, volunteers and equipment to plan and maintain Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) trails in the Pike National Forest. RRMMC has been working on the Rampart for over 50 years.

First, we must say that RRMMC supports the Vegetative Management Project. In addition to forest health, protecting adjacent private property and general safety, we are all too familiar with the trail closures that result when unplanned, uncontrolled fire consumes a forest. We are in favor of implementing the project as quickly as practical, while considering and minimizing impacts to the community and OHV recreation.

OHV use is one of the most popular, if not the most popular, recreational activity within the eastern half of the project area (east of the South Platte River). It is no exaggeration to say that the Rampart and West Creek/Divide OHV areas are the most visited OHV area along the Front Range and perhaps in the State of Colorado. The importance of this opportunity to OHV enthusiasts is borne out by user statistics acquired in 2024. RRMMC conducted a traffic survey of part of the Rampart OHV area. By projection of this data, nearly a quarter million vehicles containing OHVs, many containing more than one user, accessed the Pike NF OHV areas.

The user community has invested heavily in this resource. Tens of thousands of hours of volunteer time have been logged and several millions of dollars have been spent building and maintaining the trails by the State of Colorado OHV Program. RRMMC, the Pike Peak Ranger District, and the South Platte Ranger District have managed spending of the funds made available through sale of OHV registration stickers. The Forest Service has long been an advocate for the responsible use of OHVs in the area, working closely with user groups like ours.



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We understand that this project would be carried out over a period of 20 years. We also understand that its execution is dependent on future funding. The priority for the individual phases is also subject to the forces of nature, such as beetle kills and fires (hopefully minor) that are likely to occur during the life of the project. While detailed planning of mitigation for individual project phases as part of this EA is understandably impractical, the Recreation Design Criteria of the EA describe mitigation in a far too general way. Given the importance of OHV use in this part of the Pike National Forest, a more detailed framework is called for. The EA should lay out a process in greater detail by which impacts to OHV use and trails will be minimized and remaining impacts mitigated. This process should be incorporated into the project record. A stated goal of the project, memorialized by the decision record, should be to keep OHV use, and all recreational use, whole. The OHV community should not be financially responsible for repairing damage to the trails system which will predictably occur.

RRMMC is encouraged by the commitment expressed by the Forest Service at the public comment meetings to reach out to the user community as the individual project phases planned. RRMMC stands ready to participate in this process. We believe that through thoughtful design, we can not only maintain the OHV resource but enhance it.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Duane Zavadil'.

Duane Zavadil  
President - RRMMC