

I am opposed to Telluride Mountain Club (TMtC) proposal for construction of the Sheep Mountain Traverse under consideration by the United States Forest Service.

TMtC trail proposal states “As interest in trails and outdoor recreation continues to grow, it is crucial we provide thoughtful, recreational trail opportunities that meet the needs of locals and visitors while protecting and preserving natural areas, critical wildlife habitats, and minimizing impacts to watersheds.”

The proposed Sheep Mountain Traverse, option A and option B does nothing to fulfill this TMtC statement.

This trail would be constructed in a heavily wooded old growth forest with challenging terrain. Its construction would be a permanent disruption to the wildlife and watershed of this area. TMtC states that the single-track trail would provide more options for campers. Increased options for campers also bring an increase in potential sources for wildfire ignition. The current campsites along the Goose trail, on forest service property and illegal camp sites on private property, are often left with fire rings that have not been fully extinguished. This is not a thoughtful proposal but is extremely reckless given the increased wildfire activity in the State.

TMtC also states, “Adding a new multi-use, non-motorized singletrack trail to the south and east side of Lizard Head Pass adds trail connectivity for mountain bikers, trail runners, and hikers in this popular area and takes recreation off the busy road.” The connectivity they propose to create with construction of the Sheep Mountain Traverse already exists. The current Galloping Goose trail exists between the upper terminus of the proposed trail off the Lizard Head pass summit, and the lower terminus adjacent to the Trestle parking area. The proposed trail would connect with Trout Lake Road at the Trestle parking area doing nothing to take recreation off this road. If anything, this would add to the number of mountain bikers, hikers and trail runners utilizing Trout Lake Road from the Trestle to its junction with Highway 145.

As a long term resident of the Trout Lake and Sheep Mountain area I stand opposed for the reasons stated above.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter

Joe Pepper