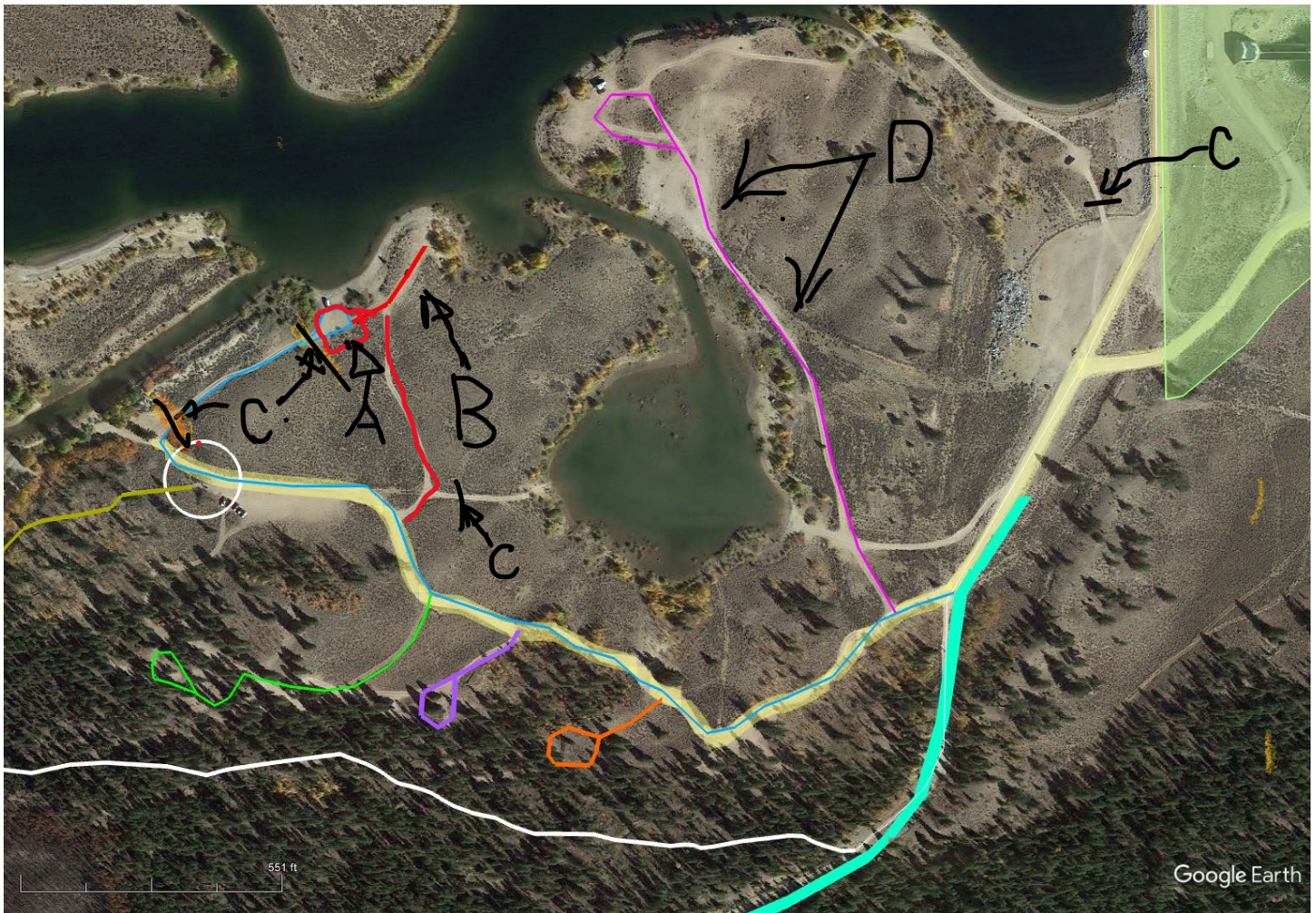


Salida Leadville vehicle based dispersed camping proposal for Interlaken area (SE corner of Twin Lakes)



Key

The map is color coded for the 6 proposed new roads the USFS wants to officially designate in this area by the ID/labels /names the USFS gave them. They are all labeled "IL" for Interlaken and then a number.

Green line -IL1

Purple line-IL2

Orange line-IL3

Medium blue thinner line- IL4 Existing Interlaken Trailhead Route (close at Trailhead)

Red line- IL5 (short route from the end of IL4)

Pink line- IL6

Red existing route IL 7

Other image info:

A: Existing Hand Launched Boat Area

B: Existing Hand Launched Boat Area (hike down)

C: Existing Closures of user created road. These should be checked and reinforced.

D: Existing road access to water. Larger area, but steeper access to water.

Light green shaded area in corner- This is Bureau of Rec. land. All the other land in the image above is USFS land.

Faint yellow shaded thicker line- This is Lake County Road 25, according to Lake County Road GIS data couple years ago. Not sure if the USFS will contest the County claiming jurisdiction over that road.

Blue green shaded thicker line- This is the only designated USFS road in the area, Road #179 the “Twin Lakes Gate Access Road”. USFS Road 179 is an administrative road that is supposed to be closed to all public motor vehicle use. There are no other officially designated USFS roads in the area, so everything else that exists on the ground is an unauthorized motorized route.

White line near bottom of image- This is the officially designated route of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. It is also the Colorado trail..

White circle- location of a trailhead, some refer to it as the ‘Twin Lakes Trailhead’ while others call it the ‘Interlaken Trailhead’.

Olive line- This is a trail that leaves the trailhead in the white circle. It does not have a number or name in USFS data. Some people refer to this trail as the ‘Interlaken Trail’. This trail intersects with and becomes the CDNST in about 12 miles. It is to apparently allow a team of USFS staff to designate dispersed campsites on “access routes” branching off these new roads that will lead to individual designated dispersed campsites. Those access routes can be up to 300 feet.

Comments Below ....

## Comments on proposed new USFS roads follow, Jay Gingrich:

GENERAL: I have experience in this area as a volunteer cleaning up human waste and trash from unmanaged camping. Road access A, B, and D is often very close to the changing water level. Users have not been protecting the resources. This has caused pollution and resource damage from driving on beach. Closures presently keep vehicles from driving on beach. A parking area exists for hand launch boats and accessible fishing marked A and B. Camping closures near the water have been ignored. There is little or no enforcement to prevent camping and resource damage. Therefore, roads to A, B, and D should be DAY USE Only. Roads north of IL4 the main road to Interlaken Trailhead should be DAY USE ONLY to protect riparian areas and domestic water in Twin Lakes.

Often there are 60+ cars parked at the trailhead in the summer. Some years ago, I convinced Aurora water to pay for porta pots at the Interlaken Trailhead, which helps to reduce impacts from day use visitors. Last year, 4 porta pots filled in the week before Memorial Day, per the pump truck driver. Aurora deserves a big THANK YOU for providing these porta pots. However, the area needs permanent CXT toilets.

Camping is occurring on the edge of the lake with changing water levels. This is causing pollution and management problems. There is no enforcement and uncertainty exists about allowed camping.

The solution is:

A. Contain camping to the area north of the present road to Interlaken trailhead in the proposed new loops with designated sites.

B. Designate the areas north of the present road as DAY USE ONLY NO CAMPING !

It is reasonable to provide water access for hand launched boats and walk in fishing. With some parking, but no camping next to the changing water levels.

### IL4

This Medium blue line route is the main and longest road they want to designate. All other newly proposed roads fork off this road, so it likely has to be designated if any/all other roads will be designated.

Lake County already claims this is an official designated County road to just past the Trailhead. So the .35 mile (622 yard) section of IL4 to the Trailhead should already be a designated road.

Re the .12 mile/205 yard segment of road beyond the Trailhead. This road is already closed by boulders from west of the trailhead kiosk to an area presently used for hand launching boats and walkable fishing access. Sections of this road are within 100 feet of the lake, and the turn around/parking loop at the end of IL 4 is within 12 yards of the lake. There are a number of additional unauthorized motorized routes branching off this proposed road that lead directly to the edge of the lake. Vehicles currently drive to and park directly adjacent to the lake for camping

All lands within a minimum of 100 feet of the lake would be considered part of a 9A Riparian Area Management Prescription Area according to the current Forest Plan. These 9A areas are mostly unmapped so they will not appear on GIS.

Twin Lakes are a managed reservoir and the water levels fluctuate. When considering a 100 -foot distance from the lake the high water mark of lake/reservoir levels should be used.

Page III-214 of the Forest Plan states roads should be located outside of 9A riparian areas

Gasoline, oil, other toxic engine fluids, brake dust, road salts/chemicals, noxious weed seeds, etc. are all likely to degrade the riparian area and pollute lake water.

The final segment of IL4 should not be designated as a road as it is within that 9A management area. This segment is presently closed with boulders and Carsonites.

If the USFS can approve a massive fuel treatment project in this area to protect the municipal water in Twin Lakes from potential water quality degradation, it must also prevent motor vehicle use from degrading water quality.

USFS needs to put a large sign up entering the area on lake county road 25 near the dam stating camping only in designated sites beyond this point. Also a large sign is needed to state that areas north of Just to reinforce that they could put up signs on the s end of the pink route, and at the intersection between IL4 the blue route and IL1 the green route that state 'day use only No camping beyond this point'

No dispersed campsites should be designated with direct access from IL4. Forest Order #02-12-00-24-05 currently prohibits any camping between this route and the lake as part of the designated Twin Lakes Recreation area. Page 5 of the EA states that there will be “no change to existing restrictions on camping around Twin Lakes Peninsula”, which we believe means that no designated dispersed sites will be created adjacent to this road.

Vehicle based camping, including any possible nearby walk in camping from the Trailhead parking area, must be prohibited. Parking at this Trailhead is limited and should be reserved for trail uses only. Conflict arises and safety may be compromised when dispersed camping mixes with trailhead use. Some trail uses feel uneasy leaving their vehicle unattended or venturing out alone when there are others watching their every move while camping at a trailhead.

### **IL5**

This entire route is within 75 feet of the high water mark of the lake, and thus it should prohibit camping and be designated DAY USE ONLY. The short distance of this route provides opportunities for hand launched boats or accessible fishing.

### **IL 1, 2 and 3**

These routes could provide acceptable access for DESIGNATED dispersed camping. They are separated from the water, but berms and drainage control must be used to prevent runoff from designated dispersed sites.

It is beneficial that they could be used to concentrate all designated dispersed camping in this area into a relatively confined and smaller area, minimizing negative environmental impacts.

CXT or portable toilets must be provided to contain human waste at dispersed camp sites.

It is good that the three proposed roads do not connect together as this will deter repetitive recreational loop OHV riding. This practice subjects other campers to unwanted noise, dust and disturbance. This frequently happens in dispersed camping areas when parents tell their children not to go to far away from their campsite. Recreational riding of OHVs through developed camping areas by those not camped there is prohibited by CFR 261.16(O), but clarification is needed as to whether or not that use could be prohibited<sup>1</sup> on road spurs specifically developed and created for the purpose of designated dispersed motorized camping.

### **IL6**

This route could be a lake access point in this area. It should be Signed DAY USE ONLY NO CAMPING. If this road provides lake access it would help separate use and reduce potential conflicts between that use, campers and trail users to the south of IL4.

Focusing access for non-motorized watercraft off this route and the one to the west would help ensure that educational messaging regarding monitoring and enforcement of dispersed camping is only to the SOUTH of the present Interlaken Trailhead route (except no camping at Interlaken Parking area).

## **PROTECT WILDLIFE**

All of the proposed new USFS roads in this area are all or partially within CPW identified elk and mule deer winter concentration areas, severe winter range, and migration corridors.

Recent statewide direction enthusiastically supported by USFS representatives involved in its development recommended avoiding, to the maximum extent possible, new route designation within each of those six priority habitat areas.

The EA states that any of these new roads could be seasonally closed if the wildlife biologist believes they need to be.



All the new proposed USFS roads in this area should be seasonally closed to motorized use from Dec 1 to April 30 to protect big game during the winter months.

Perhaps Lake County will agree to allow the USF to place a gate on the eastern end of IL4 road.

With changing and variable climate and weather, we cannot depend on deep snow to deter public motorized use on those routes during the winter months.

With the development of increasingly self-contained, insulated and heated RVs and vans, and 4wd Overland camping rigs, people will try to camp in this area during the winter months. Overnight occupancy will result in additional negative impacts to wintering wildlife above and beyond day use.

This area is an example of how USFS already has an order prohibiting camping and regulations prohibiting off route moto use but they do not educate people about those, including enforcement. It also is an example of how USFS has done some work installing those boulders (work accomplished under the existing 'no action' situation. Please step up enforcement with resources available while this NEPA is in process. It has been a VERY long time that the NEPA has been given as a reason to for not enforcing current regulations.

Thanks for considering these comments. I have been volunteering in the area for years and I am familiar with the resources, use, and problems. My self and other volunteers, including Friends of Twin Lakes, want to work to protect Forest resources. We need the USFS to put the structure in place do the work.

Regards,

Jay Gingrich

33481 County Rd 373A

Buena Vista, 81211

gingrichjay@gmail.com

9703890531