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Comments: Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison Forest Plan Revision #51806 Comments

I am an avid mountain biker and have been riding the trails on the Uncompahgre and Grand Mesa Forest lands since 1988. I think increased mountain bike access to Backcountry areas should be introduced at the Forest Plan level. I realize the Forest Plan is not a Travel Planning document but it needs to have the aspects that allow for mountain bike travel in areas or it will PREVENT travel changes. Attached are explanations of areas and trails that should be opened up for discussion about different uses and not prevented from changing by the new Forest Plan.

The Travel Plan adopted in 2002 banned mountain bikes from nearly 125 miles of non-motorized singletrack trails. The combination of exploding popularity of ATVs and a nearly 2 decade old Forest Plan resulted in some hasty decisions regarding mountain bike use on Forest Trails. The Forest Supervisor at the time realized that mountain bike use was not handled properly and promised to revisit some of the trail restrictions on mountain bikes. (See attached letter from Robert Storch). I believe it is time to look at the banning of bike on several trails and ensuring the Forest Plan allows for these discussions to take place is a first step.

Using the scoping document for reference

Table 17 page 31 Recreation mentions:

"Cycling is one of uses increasing the most"

Trail Conditions Page 35, Recreation

It is noted that maintenance is lacking on non-motorized trails due to lack funding. Maintenance is being accomplished by partnerships and Mountain bike groups are specifically mentioned as being very active in trail clearing and maintenance.

User created trails, Page 37 Recreation

It is mentioned that most of the user created trails are due to motorized and mountain bike users. I have found no unauthorized bicycle created trails on the north end of the Uncompahgre and the only mountain bike user created trail on the Grand Mesa was closed years ago.

The 2012 Planning rule directs national forests to engage youth to better connect young people to public lands and mountain biking is a great way to do this.

I have attached several letters written to Forest personnel about this issue.

Thanks for your hard work and foresight on this very important project.

Sincerely,

Dan Antonelli
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