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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Target Shooting Project

c/o Beth Davis

USDA Forest Service

5575 Cleora Road

Salida, CO 80201

January 14, 2021

Dear Ms. Davis,

We live in the Trout Creek Subdivision, just past the 90 mile marker on Highway 67. We have been living here since 1997 and have had major concerns with the Turkey Tracks Range for quite awhile. Following are some of the major concerns that we have and have regarding the Turkey Tracks range and dispersed shooting:

*Noise. We live in Trout Creek Ranch Estates, which is just over one mile from Turkey Tracks as the crow flies. The sound of discharging firearms is clearly heard within our development, even inside our homes. When we first moved here, the sound of shooting was mostly limited to weekends, but with the increased activity at Turkey Tracks, noise from that site can be heard almost every day.

*Wildfires. The Mountain Community Volunteer Fire Department responds to an average of 10 fires per year at Turkey Tracks (in 2020, the number of fires was eight). This is abnormally high for a shooting range and is especially troubling given the dry, and often windy, conditions in this area.

*Night Shooting. It is not uncommon to hear gunfire from Turkey Tracks after dark.

*Stray Bullets. There have been several reports of irresponsible and reckless shooting at Turkey Tracks. A few years ago, a man was killed by what is suspected to be a stray bullet from this site.

*Property Values. Prospective buyers are sure to be dissuaded from purchasing a home near a poorly managed shooting range and from which frequent gunfire can be heard. This has a direct impact on house/property values. On the flip side, a well-managed and sound mitigated range could potentially have a positive impact on property values.

*Dispersed Shooting. Each year, several wildfires are started from dispersed target shooting in the Pike NF, and law enforcement receives many complaints of reckless shooting in the areas where dispersed shooting is allowed.

We realize that opposition to the Turkey Tracks Range is not a popular stand. Many people are utilizing this area, some are from the area and probably others that are not local or may be tourists are coming in as well. The lack of control and monitoring allows individuals to use any type of firearms, legal or illegal and to be shooting at any time in a 24 hour period. It's not uncommon to hear automatic weapons during daylight hours and even during evenings and throughout the night-time. It's also not uncommon to hear shooting that sounds like an explosion and not a shot from any kind of firearm. I would question how anyone can be target practicing during the night-time hours, unless they are using some kind of tracer ammunition. Again, all access is unmonitored and uncontrolled.

We would bring to the committee's attention that over the years we've been here (since 1996) that the resident population has grown significantly. And while people hunted and probably did target practice in the area, it's only been in the past few years since the range came to existence that hardly a day will go by without hearing shooting continuously.

We would also point out that during the Haymen Fire, the residents in this subdivision were out of their homes for three to four weeks. Some homes were lost during that fire, and several homes experienced damage due to the wildfire. All residents were at risk and experienced substantial out of pocket expenses. As a result, homeowner's insurance costs have escalated. The ongoing fire danger related to the location of this range and the number of fires initiated in the area are unacceptable and stressful for those of us living here.

If a target range is considered to be an essential need for the area, I would think that there would be many options for establishing a business that could run such a business. Ideally a private business on private property, would provide the security necessary to manage and monitor activities. This would ensure the safety of residents and taxpayers, as well as the forest and natural resources. It would also provide tax revenue for the county that could benefit the fire protection agencies.

We encourage the committee to research the range and the risks associated with it, for the residents and tax payers of the area. Please review the points made regarding our concerns. Hopefully other options for the range, can be developed to eliminate risks, concerns, fears and the anxieties residents have over this activity and the location of it.

Best regards,

Diana Gault

Diana & Michael Gault