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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest and Grassland Supervisor Trujillo:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit comments concerning the Integrated Management Target Shooting Project. I want to say at the outset that my wife and I fully support the action proposed by your office regarding target shooting. That is, to develop at least one new shooting range in each ranger district, close certain areas of the forest to dispersed shooting altogether, and implement these measures in a prompt and condition-based adaptive framework.

My wife and I live fulltime in Park County in an area surrounded on three sides by the Pike. The forest area is served by two forest service roads, FSR 141 and FSR 143. Both roads get plenty of use with FSR 143 having been recently closed by locked gates this year for the first time during the large game birthing/rearing season of January 1 to June 15. It is our understanding that this seasonal closure will continue indefinitely into the future. Thank you much for that.

We have had our property for over ten years. During the last several years we have witnessed an ever increasing amount of unregulated shooting in the forest areas around our home. Some of it has occurred within less than 100 yards from the boundary of our subdivision, while much more has taken place at various dispersed camping sites within a mile from where we live. In warmer months, shooting regularly occurs from the earliest hours of daylight well into dusk. Much of the recent shooting has appeared to us to involve automatic weapons given the number and speed of the discharges we have heard. It is during these times that we refrain from our regular hikes into the forest for fear of being struck by a loose or wild bullet. While we have never had this happen to us, a neighbor just down the road from us has told us of occasions during which bullets have passed through his lot.

Having participated for several years in an NRA-sponsored target shooting program when I was younger, I am certainly familiar with the fun and satisfaction one can get from competitive and/or recreational shooting. While I no longer shoot at all, the problem, in our view, is that outdoor shooting has become way too widespread and uncontrolled with more and more irresponsible and careless persons apparently taking part in it. Weapons have also become much more powerful with much longer effective ranges. Where we live, shooting in the forest is just becoming too risky, if not outright dangerous. Moreover, the damage being done to the forest environment as a direct result of unregulated shooting is mounting at a frightening pace.

Attached are photos we have taken over the past couple of years of damage directly resulting from dispersed shooting in the forest areas near our home. We know you have seen pictures like these before, but that does not lessen the shock of seeing such ruthless abuse of our forests, including the felling of numerous mature trees from repeated gunfire. These photos are all from an area along FSR 143. While my wife and I regularly go to these areas during quiet times, it is difficult to keep ahead of the debris leftover from the numerous shooting orgies (shells, clay pigeons & beer cans), which we haul out and dispose of at our own expense. Additionally, and as you already know, we have experienced multiple wildfires in this area as a direct result of irresponsible or illegal shooting.

As noted at the beginning of our comments, we strongly support the Forest Service's plan to limit the areas in which dispersed target shooting may occur and urge the permanent closing of all forest areas within at least one mile of homes and subdivisions to all recreational shooting. It is just too dangerous not to do otherwise. We also strongly support the establishment of sanctioned shooting ranges in areas away from residential areas, such ranges to be developed in cooperation with shooting enthusiasts so as to provide them a challenging and worthwhile recreational experience. We are confident responsible shooters are just as concerned about the

present unregulated state of shooting in the forests as we are.

Thanks again for entertaining our comments and concerns.