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Organization: Colorado Springs Utilities

Title: Forest Program Manager

Comments: On behalf of Colorado Springs Utilities, we submit the following scoping comments with regards to the Pike Integrated Shooting Magement NEPA

[TEXT BELOW COPIED FROM ATTACHMENT]

February 22, 2021

RE: Scoping Comments Regarding Integrated Management of Target Shooting on the Pike National Forest Project

To Whom It May Concern:

Colorado Springs Utilities (Utilities) acknowledges that the Pike and San Isabel National Forests Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands is seeking scoping comments regarding the Integrated Management of Target Shooting on the Pike National Forest Project. Utilities agrees that dispersed recreational shooting is in need of a better management approach to avoid the many public safety and natural resource damage concerns in an general manner, but also within and near, critical watersheds and Utilities raw water operations while maintaining safe shooting opportunities for the public. As a member of the Southern Shooting Partnership, we are in support of the Partnership's mission to address these needs and concerns with the increasing participation of target shooting to provide for safe target shooting opportunities on the Pike National Forest while being compatible with other uses and landowners.

Utilities has analyzed the project scoping documents and maps to formalize our comments relative to the location of the Conceptual Site Designs for NFSR 372 and NFSR 376. Our analysis is specific to the location of these conceptual designs relative to our South Slope watershed operations and maintenance, employee/public safety, location of system infrastructure, watershed wildfire risk assessments and other residential and recreation uses occurring at, or near, these specific sites as well as compliance with the Pike & San Isabel National Forests Motorized Travel Management (MVUM) Final EIS and preferred Alternative C. Utilities comments are detailed as follows with corresponding maps.

NFSR372

Upon review of the conceptual design NFSR 372, Utilities is very concerned with the possibility of this being a potential shooting location and constructed facility as it presents multiple safety issues for our employees, public safety and conflicts with our water transmission infrastructure that is shown to be located beneath the footprint of the shooting range and parking lot, see MAPS 1. Rosemont Overview and 2.

Rosemont/Range Detail. Recognizing the alignment of the rifle range backstop is in the direction of the Platte Rodgers Inlet Structure, this presents the potential for straying or ricocheting bullets as a threat to the safety of our employees and the public who frequent that area at the inlet. As well, knowing the location of the Platte Rodgers Tunnel and Rosemont Reservoir Influent Pipeline connection is within the footprint of the shooting range design. It should be understood a break on this water line would result in substantial damage to the shooting

facility and parking lot.

Lastly, with the location of this facility being directly adjacent to NFSR 372, which is Utilities only access to the Rosemont Reservoir Dam, and for other private landowners via NFSR 372, this shooting facility presents a hazard to other road users from potential firearm discharges within the parking lot and road area. Understandably this risk is very dependent on shooters to have a strong gun safety etiquette, but is concerning with the lack of interest for and resources to provide routine range safety officers.

It is also important to note that NFSR 372 was identified to be converted to administrative use only under the preferred Alternative C per the Pike & San Isabel National Forests Motorized Travel Management (MVUM) Final EIS. Utilities, and other private landowner's, are dependent on NFSR 372 as their only mean to access Rosemont Dam and their respective individual properties. Given these circumstances per the identified safety issues, the co-location of Utilities water infrastructure and shooting facility, and conversion NFSR 372 this conceptual design is not supported by Utilities along any segment of NFSR 372 especially as Utilities has offered to be willing partner for the road maintenance on NFSR 372.

NFSR376

Upon review of the conceptual design for NFSR 376, Utilities is very concerned with the possibility of this being a shooting location and constructed facility as it presents multiple safety issues for our employees, public safety and conflicts with our water transmission infrastructure and operations. Of significant concern is the footprint of the rifle range where the backstop is shown to be located on Utilities' South Slope property as well as the alignment of the range which is in direct line of sight and down range the Mason Dam, associated infrastructure and service roads that are heavily used by Utilities watershed operators, support staff and contractors.

This alignment and proximity of shooting activities is unacceptable given the deadly potential of straying or ricocheting bullets in such close proximity to the Mason Reservoir Dam, outlet drain, and gauging structures frequented by Utilities employees. Similarly of concern is the close proximity of the range to the main South Slope entrance gate used by Utilities watershed operators, their family members, other Utilities personnel and recreational users visiting the South Slope Recreation Area, see MAP 3.

SS Recreation Area, Map 4 SS Detail Mason Range.

Lastly, beyond the immediate safety concerns previously mentioned, the South Slope watershed is the full-time residence of Utilities watershed operators and their families where the ongoing disturbance of gun fire will impact their quality of life and serenity of the South Slope watershed. This same concern will carry over as a conflict of incompatible uses between shooting and the passive recreation opportunities for those visiting the South Slope for the tranquility of the recreation area. It should also be noted that Utilities voluntarily helps to maintain NFSR 376 and is concerned that additional maintenance costs will be incurred related to increased use with the opening of a shooting range at the proposed site as well as anywhere along NFSR 376.

Other considerations of interest to Utilities are the proximity of the proposed shooting range on NFSR 376 to Middle Beaver Creek. Will there be a lead recovery and management plan to avoid minimize the leaching and migration of lead to the creek

Also, Utilities is all so assuming there will be an extensive review and analysis of big horn sheep habitat given the proximity of the shooting range to know sheep habitat within the South Slope watershed. Utilities has included Map 5 as some alternative locations within the South Slope-Rosemont Reservoir area that we feel are more compatible with our water utility operations and infrastructure and provide for better integrated management for local target shooting opportunities .

Utilities very much appreciates the opportunity to comment on Integrated Management of Target Shooting on the Pike National Forest Project as we understand the complexity of the issues with providing target shooting opportunities in safe manner for the public as well as ensuring shooting locations that are compatible with other recreation uses, land ownership and water utility operations. If you have any questions regarding the comments submitted or with regards to Colorado Springs Utilities water system, please feel free to contact me.