

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/16/2021 4:23:58 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: September 15, 2021

US Forest Service

Manti-La Sal National Forest

Moab/Monticello

I am writing in regards to your upcoming Travel Management Plan and specifically for the area on Elk Ridge near the Gooseberry Guard Station. I am an avid hunter, in particular, elk and have been hunting in this area for approximately 15 years. I have enjoyed not only the beauty of this area, but also the abundance of wildlife that inhabit it.

As you are aware, this area holds ample amounts of game species (deer/elk/turkeys) and is a Limited Entry Unit within the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, thus being managed for high quality populations that exhibit a higher age class for bulls and bucks. I have not had the opportunity to hunt mature bulls or bucks, but have greatly enjoyed hunting cows and spikes in this region.

As a hunter I believe in being an advocate for my sport, but more importantly for the species that I hunt. I have been extremely involved within these systems for some time, as the Chair of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation here in Moab, a current board member of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers and was a long-time Chair of the Southeastern Regional Advisory Council for the UDWR. I am also extremely involved within my community and am currently a Grand County Commissioner here in Southeastern Utah.

All of this being said, I believe that unnecessary roads do great damage not only to habitat, but the ability to provide sanctuary for wildlife. As I spend more time on Elk Ridge and with the proliferation of off road vehicles, I'm observing that these animals are having a very hard time finding that sanctuary. This issue, coupled with extreme drought conditions put them in extreme stress, which then leads to limited recruitment.

My hope is that you will consider closing the following roads to promote quality habitat, wildlife sanctuary and in the end quality hunting opportunity. These roads serve no particular purpose that would enable and/or enhance travel corridors, they fragment wildlife corridors and connectivity and degrade overall habitat for wildlife which includes soil and flora. These roads includes FS 5149, FS 5148, FS 5147, and FS 5144.

I greatly appreciate your consideration.

Trisha A. Hedin

Avid Hunter and Advocate