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Organization:

Title:

Comments: RE: Manti La-Sal Travel Plan

I have been recreating in the the La Sal and Abajo mountains for the past 22 years. I own a mountain bike shop in Moab, UT [ndash] Chile Pepper Bike Shop and am also part of the Moab Mountain Bike Association. With the travel plan alternatives that are being considered, I fully support alternative D wholeheartedly or Alternative C. Not only do I mountain bike and hike I also ride a motorcycle on motorized singletrack. The new LMP should not be attempting to limit motorized uses. As for motorcycle singletrack [ndash] the options are already very limited on the La Sal district, the Abajo district offers outstanding motorized singletrack which is shared with a growing number of mountain bikers, some of whom also ride motorcycles on the same trails. To be able to escape the summer heat, getting into the high alpine is a must for motorcyclists. The backcountry experience from my motorcycle in the alpine setting is so important and should not be taken away nor diminished with a new LMP.

In 2013, the forest travel plan took away over 60% of the forest access to mountain bikers, it was truly a gut punch to a group that had been doing trail clearing and assisting the forest service with trail maintenance for many years. To see this happen to motorized use would be the same effect. Motorcyclists clear and maintain trail along with mountain bikers in the Abajo mountains and also sections of the La Sals where 90% of the motorized singletrack is located on SITLA lands. As a mountain biker in the late 90s and into the 2000s [ndash] I had always said [ndash] as long as the cows are on the mountain we[rsquo]ll be allowed on the mountain. I[rsquo]ve seen the damage caused from grazing, I[rsquo]ve seen dead cows decaying in the creeks in the mountains. Have had their excrement fly in my face as I ride trails. So when mountain bikers were kicked out of areas in the La Sal district but to see cattle remain was truly disappointing. I don[rsquo]t want to see this happen again during this crucial step in the planning process.

Off-road use is an important recreational opportunity, one that brings money to the state and our local surrounding area. To have my recreational access further diminished by travel planning that is too restrictive also diminishes my quality of life in Moab. If I can[rsquo]t escape the desert in summer heat or experience the changing of the leaves in fall by the seat of my dirt bike, then what is the point of living in Moab. I live here because of our mountains. Without them I couldn[rsquo]t live here, and without access then what is the point of remaining here.

I truly hope that an approach to motorized travel is done so with a focus on better management instead of blanket closures. There is a need for connecting singletrack on the La Sal district. This will allow for safer travel not only for motorcycle riders but also for mountain bikers. A trail adjacent to the Geyser pass has been discussed for many years but has never been implemented. To separate use from other vehicles for mountain bikers, which should include e-bikes as well as motorcycles is much needed, especially from a safety standpoint.

Please consider Alternative D as the preferred alternative with better management as a focus and not closure.