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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Lauren and I am a full-time Ouray resident. I like the idea of a permit for popular areas, but wanted to propose a slightly different system for locals. Most of us who are younger and active choose to live here full-time largely for the access we have to the mountains and trails. Based on precedents from other popular trails that use similar systems, I assume that once the permits are instituted, they will be booked out for a year or more in advance. This effectively will make it so locals can no longer use our iconic trails (Note: I assume the Blue Lakes system will be used for other popular areas, such as Ice Lakes). We definitely won't be able to finish work early on a Thursday and head out to Blue Lakes for a hike, something I did many days last summer. This will make it much less desirable to live somewhere like this for the physically active crowd, which I believe is who we are trying to attract. Since there are only a few thousand residents in the counties surrounding most trails where the permits will likely be put in place (and not all of us hike or would choose to do a hike on the same day), I suggest that locals have our own system. I propose an annual "Local Permit" for each trail that is available for anyone living in the surrounding counties that gives us year-round access to the trails without dealing with a permit competition or lottery. There could even be tiers to this where there are cheaper permits that allow a certain number of hikes during high season, and more expensive passes that are unlimited. This would allow us to use our trails without restriction while still giving the forest service extra fees to maintain these trails. Thanks so much for the consideration.