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First name: Perry

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: RE: [External Email]Fwd: My Assessment of the NOPA

From: Glen Burgener <gburgs@mac.com>

Sent: Tuesday, March 7, 2023 7:54 PM

To: Edwards, Perry - FS, CO <James.Edwards1@usda.gov>; Mellick, Lisa - FS, CO <lisa.mellick@usda.gov>

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Subject: [External Email]Fwd: My Assessment of the NOPA

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Lisa, Perry,

I have reviewed the NOPA and commented on it. I also attended the "public meeting". I'm quite disappointed. The NOPA contains very little specificity, particularly with regard to HOW assessments were made, WHAT actions will be taken to mitigate existing conditions, and HOW and WHEN actions will be taken.

Question:

(1) The Notice of Proposed Action essentially ignores the area we are concerned about, stating the "Rainbow Trail" area (defined in Appendix B) receives relatively low VBDC activity. Proposed Action is to "adaptively manage".

Area residents, for the past several years, have documented and submitted evidence to the Salida FS office that the Rainbow Trail area, from Memorial Day to Labor Day, is overpopulated with unauthorized campers, as evidenced by the illegal camping sites along FS 184 that either violate engineering, hydrology, and/or fire management design criteria.

Question: Upon what evidence is the FS assessment based? E.g., assessed against what environmental conditions defined in Table 2 (road access, hydrology, engineering, botany, land/realty assessment, etc)? Where is the evidence supporting the FS assessment?

At the public meeting, in response to my question as to what will be different now under the "new" adaptive management approach, Perry you said you'll apply every resource available in the "Toolbox". Sadly, the toolbox doesn't have anything new in the way of managing illegal camping than what the forest service has done in the past. This is my gravest concern.

(2) Table 3, "Decision-making triggers for adaptive management implementation" defines conditions that, if experienced, would require FS intervention. Again, area residents have submitted substantial evidence showing that the Rainbow Trail area experiences "trigger conditions" for Fire Management, Public Health & Safety, Lands & Uses, Wildlife, and Recreation Resources. Environmental conditions in this area have been exacerbated by the Decker Fire, and the subsequent flooding experienced in the area since the fire.

Question: What actions are being taken NOW to "adaptively manage" (e.g., mitigate/repair) these existing conditions that require FS intervention?

Finally, Perry, you said you can't be everywhere at once, and that if local residents observe illegal camping activities, or find camping areas polluted with trash, human waste, open fires, etc., to call and that you'd respond immediately. We've done that in the past and have waited for days for a response from your office. For example, I called regarding a camper illegally parked more than 100 ft off the road, and next to my fence. The camper was there for more than two weeks before I called. He had disrupted my ditch, and was defecating in it, which I reported in my call. He had also broken down my fence to access my property to gather firewood. The initial response from your office took a week. When I received the call, I was told that the 14-day camping limit would start that day, and to document whether the camper left. There was no concern voiced over the fact the camper was camping more than 100 ft off the road, disrupting my ditch, and defecating in it downstream from his camp and trespassing on my land. The camper did not leave, so, after another call to your office, a ranger responded 3 days after I called. Do the math, he was there, camping illegally, for more than a month, disrupting my ditch flow, defecating in my ditch, trespassing on my land to gather firewood, and leaving all of his trash in a huge pile that I had to clean up after he was finally pushed out by the ranger. Is this what we can expect in the future.?

The above example is just one of the horror stories local area residents have documented over the past several years. Perry, we've sent you the evidence, just as we sent it to your predecessor, Jim Pitts. I'd welcome the opportunity to discuss this with both of you in person.

glen burgener

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