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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Please see the attached letter.

[TEXT BELOW FROM ATTACHED LETTER]

Park County recognizes the challenge of managing diverse outdoor recreation on Pike National Forest. Hikers, horseback riders and mountain bikers, cross-country and trail, off highway vehicle (OHV) enthusiasts, campers, and recreational shooters create a risky mix. Where one type of recreation can cross into another and pose a danger there is a need to act in a thoughtful manner. Grouping similar behaviors so each can enjoy with minimal conflict seems the best option. Park County is generally supportive of the SSP process and of managed target shooting using measurable data and conditions for decision-making. It seems the presentation of the reasoning and data is missing. Park County's primary concern is the health, safety and welfare of people recreating within the county. While we respect personal responsibility and believe most recreationally shoot responsibly, there is a line where the density of outdoor recreators, campers, hikers, OHV's, horseback riders, mountain bikers, in-holding residences and recreational shooters can pose a potential danger to each other and cause a negative impact on those enjoying their preferred outdoor experience. Some campers seek fresh air and quiet as their preferred outdoor experience. Density of recreation should be a primary factor in the decision-making. Where outdoor recreation is concentrated due to topography and the decisions of the ranger district like designated motorized vehicle recreation and designated camping, recreational shooting should be limited to a designated shooting range. In these concentrated areas, camping and motorized recreation is limited to the National Forest Service Roads which are also shared by mountain bikers. Non-motorized recreation, horseback riders, hikers and mountain bikers are pushed to traverse cross country or on trails. The cross country recreator can be put at risk by dispersed shooting since there is no indication of their existence and their safety is based on responsible safe shooting practices. Wildlife also concentrates in the areas where cross country recreation occurs since much of their habitat is impacted by noisy recreation. This scenario lends to a designated shooting range nearby with reduced or closed dispersed shooting as delineated in scenario 2. Frequency of alcohol consumption is another support argument for scenario 2. Separating dense camping and OHV access from recreational target shooting reduces the likelihood an intoxicated person will be discharging firearms. Requiring an intentional trip to a shooting location in a motor vehicle rather than an OHV may reduce the likelihood of alcohol and firearms mixing. It would be beneficial for a description of the data/reasoning used to arrive at scenario 2 (wildlife impact, recreation density, private property, residences and other factors) be provided to the public to understand how this option was arrived at. The "why" for option 2 should be provided. If some of the proposed closure areas are not supported by data or sound reasoning, then possibly the area should remain open if there is reasonable access. Other areas of the South Park and South Platte Ranger Districts do not have the same dense cross-over of recreation and can remain open to dispersed target shooting as shown in scenario 2. Communication will lead to good management. In the designated campgrounds and dispersed camp areas, communication is needed to allow for safe recreation. By creating a layer map of the high-use areas and designating suggested areas for specific types of recreation, all can enjoy their public lands in the manner they prefer. Designated camping [ndash] establish a quiet camping loops where no motorized recreation vehicles or motorcycles are allowed in the campsites. Hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders, (maybe also provide a separate area for horse campers), can enjoy the forest without the OHV impact. A smart phone application could provide low-impact cross country recreation designations and trails by a visual map layer in an effort to separate recreation that can pose harm. OHV are restricted to the National Forest Service Roads with that being a designated layer. With a layer provided to show a nearby shooting range as well as open designated shooting,

the shooting enthusiast can find a location to recreate. In general Park County is in support of option 2 if there is good data to support the proposed map. The [ldquo]how[rdquo] map 2 was arrived at and a clear explanation provided to the public will lead to buy-in and support of the proposed change. Ultimately, the health, safety and welfare of those visiting Park County to recreate is the primary concern and good communication and management to support the decision is paramount.