Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/29/2023 7:00:00 AM
First name: Peter
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Organization: CPW
Title: Land Use Coordinator
Comments: RE: National Forest System Road (NFSR) 736 / Farris Creek Road #65229Dear Emily Nutgrass,Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed travel management revision for a portion of National Forest System Road (NFSR) 736, also known as the Farris Creek Road. The proposed revision would retain the current designation of Farris Creek NFSR 736 as open to all vehicles for the first 1.7 miles and the remaining two miles would be re-designated as a motorized trail open to motorized vehicles 50[rdquo] or less in width.Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has a statutory responsibility to manage all wildlife species in Colorado; this responsibility is embraced and fulfilled through CPW[rsquo]s mission to protect, preserve, enhance, and manage the wildlife of Colorado for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of the people of the State and its visitors. CPW would offer the following comments relative to this proposal.The first two miles of Farris Creek Road (approximately) fall within a CPW mapped mule deer & elk Migration Corridor - High Priority Habitat. Migration corridors are defined as sites where large numbers of animals migrate and loss of which would change migration routes. Limiting disturbance in these important areas is a priority for CPW. Furthermore, perpetual elk refuging issues occur on private lands adjacent to Farris Creek, for which CPW is continuously seeking ways to mitigate. Encouraging wildlife use of public lands is a priority for CPW, and therefore we suggest and support any travel management prescriptions that may enhance security for animals throughout the year on public lands.CPW would respectfully suggest that the Gunnison Ranger District consider several potential options for the two miles of Farris Creek Road proposed for travel management revision: 1) Consider changing the route designation to mechanized, non-motorized; or 2) Designate the route as a motorized single-track trail rather than the proposed 50[rsquo][rsquo] or less. Your scoping document identifies that there has been significant damage to a wetland area where Farris Creek Road crosses a habitually wet, low-lying area. Full-sized vehicles have created multiple braids and ruts attempting to cross the wet area, causing damage to soils and watershed resources. Designating the last two miles of Farris Creek Road as mechanized or motorized single-track is a conservation-oriented solution that should reduce wetland impacts, while maintaining connectivity for thru-users of trail 409. CPW is also concerned with overall use compliance if this single route were to have three different motor use designations moving forward.
CPW appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and input. If you have any questions or would like further clarification, please don[rsquo]t hesitate to contact myself or District Wildlife Manager, Codi Prior, 970-275-2409.Very Respectfully,Brandon DiamondArea Wildlife Manager, Area 16CC: Area 16 File; SW Region File