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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing on behalf of myself and other concerned members of the Idarado Legacy HOA to formally express our opposition to the proposed hiking trail that would bring thousands of hikers to the south of our community. While we fully support outdoor recreation and responsible access to nature, this particular proposal raises serious concerns about the impacts on our neighborhood's safety, privacy, and overall quality of life.

The influx of hikers resulting from this trail would create significant traffic congestion on roads that were not designed to accommodate high volumes of visitors. Increased vehicle presence will lead to parking issues, road wear, and potential safety hazards for residents, particularly children, dogs and pedestrians.

Furthermore, trespassing and property encroachment are major issues we anticipate arising from this trail. Experience from other high-traffic trails has shown that without proper enforcement and barriers, hikers frequently stray onto private land, creating conflicts between residents and visitors. This would increase the burden on our community to address unauthorized access, potential vandalism, and disturbances to our peaceful environment.

Additionally, we are concerned about the environmental impact this project would have on the local ecosystem. The proposed trail location is home to diverse wildlife and delicate vegetation, which could be harmed by the high volume of foot traffic and improper trail use. Erosion, littering, and habitat disruption are all significant risks that should not be overlooked. Another critical concern is the issue of off-leash dogs running off the trail and chasing wildlife. This already happens along the existing river trail, where dogs have been seen chasing elk, disrupting their habitat, and causing undue stress to the herd. The mine tailings area has served as a peaceful oasis for elk, and increased human and canine activity in this new trail area would further threaten their safety and well-being.

Moreover, the existing River Trail, which was funded by Idarado Legacy HOA, already accomplishes the same start and end points as the proposed hiking trail. This established trail provides a scenic and well-maintained route for hikers without introducing additional environmental strain, safety hazards, or property encroachment concerns. Given that a suitable alternative is already in place, the necessity of developing a redundant trail is highly questionable and unjustified.

We urge the Telluride Mountain Club and US Forest Service to reconsider using these funds for other more needed trails. We appreciate your consideration of our concerns and look forward to an open dialogue on this matter.

Sincerely,
Tim Barton

Attaching photos of a harem of female elk and a bull elk, in very close proximity to the proposed trail, during mating season.