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Organization:

Title:

Comments: CDNST reroute comments in Rio Grande USFS

Dear USFS, Rio Grande area,

The area of the proposed reroute is just south and slightly west of our businesses Absolute Bikes and Absolute Bikes Adventures. Absolute Bikes in Salida was started in 1999 and in 2008 we added Absolute Bikes Adventures as a mountain bike guiding company. We operate on USFS lands in the San Isabel and Leadville Ranger Districts, BLM lands in Salida and Leadville areas, and State Parks lands along the Arkansas River near Wellsville and Howard. In 2003 we helped establish Salida Mountain Trails which is an all volunteer trail organization working on trails in the areas surrounding the City of Salida.

In the past years we have watched with interest the creation, maintenance, and use of the many trails in our area. Trails and specifically the Salida Mountain Trails (SMT) area are a passive form of economic development. Our small town benefits with visitors using the trails and also visiting our restaurants, retail, and lodging services. As a trail user we also take note of who we see on the trails, how easy they are to access, and who is going to help design, build, and maintain them once they are completed.

The proposed reroute in the San Luis Valley is going to transform a rarely traveled road section of the CDNST to a new section of trail which will be built to IMBA trail standards. The old section will be left motorized and the new section we believe should be mechanized (bicycle friendly), equestrian, and hiking accessible. This creates the economic development small rural towns in the San Luis Valley will openly embrace. It is remotely located yet not too far away from large population areas like the Front Range to visit in one tank of fuel. By allowing bicycle travel it will also increase the chance of a much larger volunteer base to help build the trail and help move along expected completion dates. From our experiences in extremely remote trail locations there is rarely a user conflict, in fact meeting another trail user even though from another group is almost always welcome.

If the decision to realign this section of the CDNST does not include mechanized such as bicycles it will be likely only used by a small number of CDNST thru hikers.

If the decision includes bicycles as part of the user group it will help economic development in an area which will embrace the visitors. It is remote enough to avoid conflict from the few user groups. The building of the trail can call from a much larger volunteer group.

Any questions please give me a call as I am passionate about this area and would love to add it to our places to send bicycling visitors.

Shawn

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