



July 23, 2020

Comment on USFS Rico Trails Project – Revised Draft Environmental Assessment (EA).

The Rico Trails Alliance (“RTA”) has invested heavily in the USFS’s review and future implementation of the Rico Trails Project. At the same time, RTA recognizes that recreational trail users impact wildlife to varying degrees and that the impacts of growing trail use should be addressed on a site-specific basis.

Accordingly, RTA supports the seasonal wildlife closure (May 15-June 30) of Ryman Creek Trail, which is proposed as the third alternative in the revised Environmental Assessment dated 6/24/20 (“EA”).

Alternative 3 represents an effective compromise by restricting all use of an identified sensitive area during elk calving season, while still providing a recreational opportunity when appropriate. This seasonal closure is also consistent with other high-elevation early-season wildlife closures in southwest Colorado. Expanding the Ryman Creek Trail seasonal closure to include Salt Creek Trail or other areas outside of the scope of this project or EA, however, is not justified or appropriate.

Sincerely,

Mike Contillo
Vice President
Rico Trails Alliance