

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/24/2017 6:00:00 AM

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Title:

Comments: FW: Middle Fork Cimmaron trail near Silver Jack Reservoir

From: Bill Rolfe [mailto:bill_rolfe@hotmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, August 02, 2017 3:16 PM

To: Brown, Sean L -FS <seanbrown@fs.fed.us>

Subject: Middle Fork Cimmaron trail near Silver Jack Reservoir

Hello Sean,

My wife and I, and friends Trish and Alan Miller, traveled from Fort Collins/Lyons area, about a 6-7 hour drive one way, to camp at Silver Jack so that we could hike the Wilderness trails, East Fork and Middle Fork (of the Cimaron River). The East Fork trail was in good shape when we hiked it on July 27; we remembered it well from last year when we also came to the area to hike. On Friday, July 28 we hiked the first mile of Middle Fork trail (this was the day before the monsoonal rainfall that night). As opposed to the normal East Fork trail, dirt, 18 inches wide, a little bit of mud everywhere, we encountered 100 to 200 yard sections of five foot wide black extremely damp mud/muck that was mud mixed with cow manure. About 50% of the mile that we hiked was in this condition. There were about 20 cows in the Wilderness area as a guestimate. It varied between mildly irritating to almost repulsive. Our friends turned around after a mile and left the area in disgust and drove back to Fort Collins.

We picked up a brochure for the Uncompahgre Wilderness Area for citizens to read. It says "This area was designated as "wilderness" by Congress to provide you and future generations with the benefits of an enduring primitive resource that is unimpaired by human civilization." I have hiked Wilderness areas in Colorado from age 30 to 62, and this was the most impaired and degraded Wilderness area I've personally seen. I've volunteered to help cut blowdown trees in USFS Wilderness area in Summit County, and we had to carry in two miles 8 foot handsaws that were manufactured in the 1920's I believe so that we would walk softly when we did trail maintenance so there would be no 'human civilization' effects.

I spoke to some folks in the Delta office, they did explain that the rancher special interest group was given special priority in the 1970's when the area was made a Wilderness area. As I reflect on this, and the politics of 2017, I do understand compromises. But upstream from the Wilderness area is normal forest service land very wide, with lots wider grazing areas. Possibly the cows wandered across the trailhead and no one knows about it, in which case you can take action, but I'm assuming that isn't the case. I wanted to give written input that there isn't much grazing grass down the narrow canyon compared to upstream, and in my opinion proper stewardship would mean that 'enduring primitive resource that is unimpaired by human civilization' would mean you'd keep

the cows upstream from the Wilderness area border and trailhead. The ranchers' benefit downstream in the Wilderness area appeared to be limited, but it totally degraded citizens' ability to enjoy the Wilderness area.

Please take this as input into range allocation of lands.

best regards,

William D. Rolfe

U.S. taxpayer and citizen

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