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First name: Colin

Last name: pickett

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am commenting on the USFS proposal in regards to Silent Tracks wanting the Granite Basin and West Cement Mountain area to be designated as a wilderness area and for trail 553 to be closed to motorized use. This proposal upsets me greatly as I am an avid mountain biker, hiker and motorcyclist. First off this area is one of the least used zones in the region and holds some of the best motorized and non motorized trails in the area including 553, Roaring Judy Trail, Granite Basin and Echer Gulch. Transforming this area to wilderness would close some of the best single track in the valley to mountain bikes and in turn eliminating an area that in my opinion contributes to the user experience offered in our national forest to both locals and tourists alike. Over the past summer I used this zone to recreate at least ten times both on my bicycle and motorcycle and I never once saw an angry hiker, actually I saw none at all... As far as other motorcyclists, I rarely have seen people riding 553 as it is a challenging trail. I have seen some mountain bikers riding 553 and know of some who enjoy the granite basin, roaring judy area (as they should). The issue of noise and wildlife impact in this area is extremely minimal in my opinion because of the low user numbers. Silent Tracks has stated that "Anyone using our trails OR watching the inflow into the backcountry of users, cannot deny the overwhelming numbers of of quiet users" and to me this means that there needs to be more regulations in regards to hikers, horseback and campers in the GNF as they are having an impact on trail erosion (use of foot and horseback during muddy/wet times) and other waste issues. I truly believe that motorcyclist and mountain bikers are overall stewards of the land and want to preserve our trails as much as possible while respecting other users. I must also say that as a multi-sport-recreationist more often than not hikers are the ones with a bad attitude that can have an extremely negative impact on other users experience including tourists, who after all are the ones who all of us rely on to make ends meet. I could go on as I am passionate about preserving the multi-use experience in the Gunnison valley and a proposal such as this would be more detrimental to the user experience than good. Sincerely, Colin Kennedy Pickett