

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/7/2017 12:08:38 AM

First name: Shaun

Last name: Anon

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a longtime user of Forest Service & other public lands, one of the largest trends I would like to see reversed is the overregulation of camping and the exclusion of bikes from wilderness areas. I come from a family that knows the mountains of Colorado very well. I've climbed hundreds of peaks and over the years. During that time, access to those peaks has become increasingly difficult due to closed roads, closed 'at-large' camping sites, and the general degradation of existing 4x4 trails. While regulation certainly needs to exist to some degree, I've seen a disturbing trend aimed at consolidating people into what amounts to 'sacrificial' higher-use areas so that lesser-used areas can be preserved via a process of eliminating reasonably easy access. While this has some value, it limits those of us seeking a different kind of backcountry experience--one where we can find a bit of solitude without donning an overnight backpack for a multi-mile trip.

In regards to mountain bike usage, I would love to see this activity opened up to more trails. However, rather than the current system of allowing non-motorized (mountain) bikes access to the same trails as dirt bikes & ATVs, I strongly believe it makes more sense to allow mountain bikers access to many (not all) current hiking/equestrian only trails. Unlike their motorized counterparts, mountain bikes are still a human-powered object limited by the strength of the individual, rather than of a machine. As such, the effect on the environment is far less destructive. I'm not sure if any studies have been done on this, but from personal experience I find trails that are heavily used by horses undergo far more erosion than those used by bikers. A large reason for this is that horses will walk right through muddy, boggy areas with little aversion to it, while hikers and bikers will slow and find a more careful route through (or around). Not all trails would be ideal for mixed hiking/biking use--those that offer steep, fast descents would need to be carefully considered for hiker's safety. But many trails, such as those around Fruita, CO in the Devil's Canyon or Polluck Bench area would be suitable for bikers--offering a large expansion to the world-famous biking Fruita offers with minimal effort and minimal impact. The same hold true for many of the trails higher up in the mountains. Due to the altitude and terrain, the speeds bikers could potentially reach are limited, while the possibility for unique recreation experiences are not!