

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/7/2017 6:31:16 PM

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Comments: Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre National Forest Plan.

I live in Montrose, and the Uncompahgre Plateau is the nearest National Forest. Unfortunately there is almost no opportunity for non-motorized recreation on the entire Plateau. There are hundreds of miles of motorized trails.

Quiet use via foot or bicycle must always be wary for fast-approaching and loud motorcycles, ATVs, etc. This state of affairs almost eliminates opportunities to experience quiet and nature. The Uncompahgre Plateau is a quasi-industrial landscape where vehicles can go just about anywhere. There should be many more roadless areas with non-motorized trails allowing people to experience the forest without the roar of engines and the danger of fast-moving motorcycles and ATVs.

Mountain biking is possible on the motorized trails, but the experience is often marred by steep rocky and eroded sections of trails. These trails are unsustainable and have changed the drainage patterns via fall line trails that turn into gullies. Some trails appear to go through springs (Buck Trail #149), which makes these a muddy mess for much of the riding season. The Red Canyon Trail #118 has turned into a 4-foot deep trough in places. All motorcycle trails that I've been on have shown significant erosion and get deeper every season (Aspen Trail #125, Hornet Trail, #131, etc.).

The non-motorized multi-use trails near Crested Butte appear to be a great model for future management of the Uncompahgre Plateau. The user groups are changing, with the numbers showing many more non-motorized user than motorized users. The fact that most of the trails are motorized, but the users are mostly nonmotorized, indicates a needed change in the distribution of recreation opportunities. The resource should be modified to serve the majority of users' needs, rather than devoting almost all of the resource to a minority of users (in this case, the motorized recreators).

The Recreation Assessment Report in the GMUG confirms the above statements. "Nature-based recreation" is expanding. I believe that non-motorized trails open to mountain bikes are compatible with this recreation category. Trails can be designed to slow speeds in order to minimize user conflicts with hikers and equestrian users.

New non-motorized trails open to mountain bikes should be allowed on the Uncompahgre Plateau. The Dallas Trail near Ouray should be rerouted in a number of places to reduce erosion and improve the hiking and bicycling experience.

Ebikes should be limited to motorized trails only.

As noted in the assessment, trailhead toilets and designated dispersed sites is needed to better manage the current usage of the forest. In particular, the Dave Wood Forest Boundary Trailhead, Forest Fence Trailhead, and State's Draw Trailheads should have toilet facilities.

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment. I hope that the Revised Forest Plan is more inclusive of non-motorized users than currently.

Garry Baker

Montrose Resident