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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My love lies in the wild spaces and areas of refuge that require effort to get to, but provide vast rewards in respect to silence, vistas, solitude. I am a hiker having 'cut my teeth' so to speak in the hills of northern California before claiming Alaska as home from 1991 through 2011. My husband and I started and maintained the Anchorage Adventurers Meetup site - an active list of upwards of 700 members who signed on to explore all of Alaska whether by boat, foot or bike. We had vast public lands at our feet and spent years moving through those precious lands.

We arrived in Fruita, CO in spring of 2011 having seen it once and fallen in love with its proximity to public lands with forests up high and open desert below. We have reproduced our Anchorage Adventurers in the form of the Western Slope Adventurers - growing it for the past 7 years into a 400+ member group. To put it simply - we live on public lands finding them a rich pasture indeed for exploration and access to places that range from the simple walk to the high peaks with everything in between.

Last year I joined the Great Old Broads for Wilderness as a way to help actively support our public lands through land restoration projects, wilderness monitoring hikes and public education outreach as ways to give back to this most precious resource. This year I took on the leadership of the Grand Junction Broadband.

While I understand the need for precise areas that need commentary, I would like to focus my comments on the larger picture. I see the forest service stepping into a vastly different world of management of pressure to the service requests for more motorized travel, income generating extraction development and high impact recreational use. I will say that wilderness designations, hiking, horse travel and establishing quiet trails ought to be and stay top priority. These are sections that once gone, once brokered away will never return. It is imperative that the forest service plan consider how management will answer to the ever increasing conflicts it will need to mitigate - demands for off-road vehicle and bike travel, continued grazing, housing and extraction industries butting up against the borders of the forest lands along with preserving wilderness along with near wilderness areas.

As off-road vehicles get ever more powerful and the owners ever more desirous of terrain to test the vehicles, it is clearer and clearer that your plan has to have ways to mitigate both the travel and the increased desire to penetrate further into forested lands. I wish that there was far more wilderness areas than a mere 5% overall.

This is what I hope can happen:

- 1)Protect in every respect areas of wilderness, quiet areas and trails areas from pressure to increase motorized areas by adopting the Citizen's Proposal for Wilderness areas.
- 2)Identify organizations that can formally partner with the forest service as volunteers to help fill in the gaps created by diminished staff. Such partners can be the Western Slope Adventurers, Colorado Archaeology Association, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, etc. Rather than 'hoping' volunteers will show up - let us actively create a program that helps funnel volunteers, provides training and increase local support for the forests.
- 3)Identify and plan for conflict zones at the edges of the forest (industrial development, encroaching populations and/or additional road and recreational access).

Organizations: Leader: Grand Junction Broadband, Great Old Broads for Wilderness

co-organizer: Western Slope Adventurers Meetup