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Organization:

Title:

Comments: When I use the term "outdoor enthusiast" in reference to myself, I really mean it. I hunt big game and birds, fly fish, dirtbike, 4wheel, horse- and goat-pack, and have multiple dogs who backcountry pack with me. As my hobbies cross many land-use regulations, I'm pretty in tune with the need to balance environmental concern and user-group interests, and the "one size fits all" language that would completely eliminate the recreational activity of goatpacking in Colorado forests gravely concerns me.

I'm sure other comments have mentioned the usefulness of goats in supporting hunting and backpacking; the established practice of using goats for natural weed control; the dedication of packgoat owners to proper vetting and maintaining disease-free herds; and most critically, the fact that NOT A SINGLE STUDY HAS LINKED PACKGOATS TO DISEASE TRANSMISSION IN BIGHORNS.

What I want to stress is, the devastating effect that completely removing a recreational activity from Colorado forests, without proof of the reason used for elimination, will forever impact this activity. Other forest managers will likely follow suit and make it increasingly difficult for packgoat folks to enjoy any forest. I find it highly concerning when decisions with incredible impact are made without being based on fact - and we all know once regulations are in the books, they are almost impossible to reverse, even after another decade of study still shows no negative link between domestic and wild sheep contact (if there even is!).

Colorado enjoys a status that truly embodies the meaning of "Land of Many Uses", and it would be devastating and shameful to begin the elimination of an entire recreational activity without any proof of the supposed reason! It's reminiscent of bans on mountain or dirtbiking, because of "damage to trails", while grazing cows and packtrains completely demolish the once-single track. Please don't set an ill-founded example for other forests to follow.

I request the ban on page 27 be removed, and that the reference to packgoats on page 143 be removed since packgoats are NOT an example of disease transmission to bighorn sheep.