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Organization:

Title:

Comments: USFS,

I strongly encourage you to reconsider a forest wide ban on pack goats. packgoats have been an instrumental part of getting our three children into back country locations that may not be possible for young children without them. The opportunities they provide to enjoy our national forests are very unique and would hate to lose them based on perceived misconceptions with this animal and a lack of hard science to justify such a ban.

Before any ban on packgoats is implemented, I strongly ask that the USFS provide sound scientific evidence that packgoats present a risk to the health & survival of Bighorn Sheep. A quantitative risk analysis specific to packgoats rather than brush/herd domestic goats for the risk of disease transmission, between packgoats and bighorn sheep should be conducted using best available research techniques prior to banning packgoats from any public lands. The quantitative analysis should include risk of contact and not just the risk of disease transmission as these are two separate issues.

When developing such a risk analysis, please allow a subject matter expert on packgoats to participate in your analysis rather than relying on wildlife biologists and such organizations as the Wild Sheep Foundation as they may have trained or political biases.

Taking simple measures such as implementation of best management practices can minimize & reduce the risk of contact between packgoats and bighorn sheep and prevent a user group such as packgoaters from being banned from Colorado forests.

If a packgoat ban is put into place, my family and I will no longer have reason to travel to Colorado and use your beloved national forests.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the proposed plan and hope you strongly consider allowing packgoats to continue to use your forests.