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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My all-time favorite thing to do is to hike away from the road, find a spot on the side of a mountain, and just look out over a big valley or set of ridges and take in the beauty of the Earth. It is not only enjoyable and relaxing, but it is therapeutic. I have made many decisions and solved a few personal problems just sitting and watching nature. This love of the outdoors has transferred to my children. We love to spend time together in the outdoors. My oldest son, especially, loves to be a part of that special time.

It is more difficult for him to enjoy these beautiful vistas and serene moments. He was born with cerebral palsy and a seizure disorder. Every day life is an extreme challenge. When we are camping or hunting it is monumental, but we do it because he enjoys it so much. Because he is completely bound to a wheel chair, hiking any distance is not possible without an army to carry him. So we travel old four wheel drive roads that most people don't use in order to get him into nature and away from the cars and dust of the main roads. He loves it! We have spent countless hours of his life bonding with each other and with nature because we have access to these old roads.

After reading through the proposals to limit travel in our national forests, I can't understand why there is NO thought or accommodation for the disabled. The disabled community is just as important as any other community being considered by the Forest Service, including the communities in nature. The problem, as I have found in most situations in life, is that the disabled community has a very small voice, due to the fact that many of them can't communicate the same way you and I do. Because they are not "loud", or "squeaky", they are many times overlooked and not considered. This seems to be the case here and, unfortunately, it is called DISCRIMINATION. I understand there are limitations and that a person that can't walk will likely never hike to the top of Mount Humphrey's, but why are we trying to limit them instead of encouraging them. By restricting access to the national forests we are depriving people of valuable opportunities. By restricting access to older four wheel drive roads, you are taking away a valuable and happy part of my son's life.

I get the fact that we need to take better care of the forests when we are there. I get the fact that there are communities within the forests that have needs. It is beyond my understanding, however, why we are restricting access instead of teaching people to care for and respect the forests. Is it really too difficult for the Forest Service to teach and be partners with those that use the forest? It seems to me that restriction is just the EASY way out.

In conclusion, I would just like to ask the Forest Service to reconsider what communities they are affecting and how large that effect really is to those that don't have the same abilities as the rest of us. It breaks my heart to think that there could ever be fewer opportunities to those who typically have already fewer opportunities. Please understand that there are many who enjoy the outdoors because there is access to places that afford them the privacy and serenity that nature has to offer. We cannot discriminate any longer.