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Comments: I think the Rico area is uniquely positioned to provide exceptional trail systems for citizens, and that by supporting the Rico Trails Project proposal and giving the Rico Trails Alliance the agency to connect and add to the infrastructure of existing and new trails, we are working to support the specialties of the area.

The number of drainages that perpendicularly intersect the Dolores River Valley from both east and west of the Dolores River have created a series of trails that utilize the natural drainage features up and down Highway 145, and I have been to few other locations that have such a unique and accessible layout that sits in public land, connects to high country, and provides a forested and biologically-diverse progression to above timberline terrain.

I feel that the suggested Rio Grande Southern Trail, proposing a connection from Rico to the Ryman-Salt and Scotch Creek trail systems, would begin to allow for the trails off Highway 145 to be seen as contiguous and part of a complete system, since current connections, by highway, are generally recognized to be done by vehicle or if willing to risk walking or biking the shoulder of the highway, making the present option to not feel like a good or true connection from trail to trail.

As well, because the trails in the Dolores Valley and Rico area are characteristically well organized, I think this allows for a good and easy opportunity to control the ordering of the mode of transportation that the trails are open to. I know it is important to have some trails open to motorized vehicles for enthusiasts of this mode, and I ask that the trails which are designated for motor traffic be organized by the impact that the trail and surrounding ecosystem will see or have already seen. Mining roads and areas with historically and previously established routes through rock scree buffer the impact of usage better than trails through more fragile and vulnerable ecological communities. And on a proposed trail, like the Rio Grande Southern Trail, I think motorized vehicles should not be permitted. The area is set up perfectly for managing and organizing higher impact use.

Thank you for allowing the public to have a say about the future of Rico trails, and I will continue to be a supporter of potential and careful development of trail systems in this very special region.