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First name: Shawn

Last name: Ogden

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I would like to take this opportunity to point out a few things that some people may not know about, that are happening in Rapid River. After reading through the public comments it is apparent to me that while some of you have probably hiked in the area you do not know much about it. Yes it is a very pristine place and while the cold clean water is very important to the fish, allowing 2-wheeled motorized travel within a quarter mile of the high water mark is not going to have any adverse affect whatsoever. Prior to 2010 motorcycles had been crossing Rapid River in several different locations and people were still touting its outstanding and remarkable values. If you care to take a look back at some of the old maps they will show that motorcycles travelled most of the trails in Rapid River and the West Fork of Rapid River.

Someone made the comment that there had been previous attempts to reroute trail #188 out of the creek bottom and that resulted in illegal reuse of the existing trail down the creek bottom. Trail #188 has never been rerouted and there are long pressure treated bridges that span the wet areas. This trail does not even run within sight of Lake Fork Creek with the exception of the bottom portion that is either within or near the corridor and at that point the trail is on a dry old road bed. Another comment from this individual pointed out that trail #191 was being used to haul camping gear into the Paradise Flat area so it could be cached for later use after the seasonal closure of the trail. While I do believe that has happened in the past I have no way of proving it. A friend and I have packed out ruined gear that was left in at the flat by hunters from the previous fall. I do know for a fact that the individual complaining about this caching has cut his own trail to a small pond on the north side of Paradise Flat and has his own small cache. There are also electric fence insulators nailed to trees, fiberglass posts laying around, bailing twine is scattered about the camping area and at one time he would leave a splitting maul and wood stove at this camp year around. Since we are on the subject of caching camp supplies let us not forget about the outfitter in the area. Every camp the outfitter has in the area has a cache. Just because it is well hidden in the trees or put in the outhouse doesn't mean it's not cached. The one camp that was mentioned in the outfitters comment has been there for as long as I can remember and it has coexisted with motorized travel for years. If the outfitter is lying to their clients and telling them they are in the wilderness that is not the fault of any motorized user.

There is so much talk about the erosion that will be caused by allowing these trails to be used by motorcycles, but let us not forget that these trails were once open to motorcycles and there didn't seem to be any adverse affects. On the other hand we have trail #177 that runs the length of Rapid River and is within only a few feet of Rapid River along much of its route. This trail is heavily traveled by pack stock during the year and there are areas that get beat powder dry by these animals and when it rains, that sediment only has to go a couple feet before it is deposited directly into the river. When it is wet and muddy the same thing happens. I have yet to hear of anyone banding together to stop this "mess" from happening, but maybe that isn't the real goal here. Maybe there are a lot of adults that use the area that never learned to share.

I would also like to point out that Rapid River being classified a wild river is not allowed to have anything man made that will obstruct the wild flow of the river. Again, I don't see anyone banding together to move the bridge abutments, of the nearly a dozen bridges, above the high water mark or tear out the gabion baskets that are in the river for the purpose of holding the trail on the hillside. I guess we'll all follow the rules we like and disregard the ones we don't.