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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to support the proposed OHV trail connecting the Sauls Creek OHV trail system with the OHV trail system that is entered off of road 525 southeast of Bayfield. This trail is needed for the following reasons:

- 1) It provides a fire break that will assist the Forest Service in fighting fires that break out in the area.
- 2) There are many people in this area that ride OHV's. Many ride because they physically can't get into these areas of the National Forest any other way. The use of this proposed OHV trail would greatly expand the riding opportunities for these people.
- 3) The trail system off of road 525 is designated for use by OHV's. Unfortunately, there is very little space at the trail head for parking. Many times people using these trails -horses, hikers, bicyclists and OHV's - have to park their vehicles and trailers at the side of the road 525 presenting a hazard for the residents of the area as well as the fire fighters in the event of a fire. Providing an alternative location for parking would reduce this potential hazard.
- 4) In contrast to usage by horses, hikers and bicyclists, OHV's, because of their wider footprint would provide some maintenance of the fire break for use by the Forest Service in the event of a fire.
- 5) The OHV trails at either end of the proposed trail offer rides of longer length, approximately 20 miles each, and I am not aware of any significant environmental issues associated with these trails. The proposed trail is relatively short in length - only 5 miles long - so there would be minimal incremental impact, if any, to the environment. OHV Trails in the Rio Grande National Forest north of Pagosa Springs are substantially longer - one is almost 80 miles long.
- 6) My husband and neighbors have walked the entire length of the proposed trail and the route, for the most part, it appears to be a very good fire line and one that could be used by OHV's in a responsible fashion. And, if required, may re-routed in places to accommodate any concerns.
- 7) The proposed trail would build good relationships between the National Forest Service and the local OHV community. An example of this type of relationship that currently exists is between the Rio Grande National Forest Service and the Pagosa Springs Trail Riders club. This relationship greatly improves the management of the forest and benefits everyone.

For these reasons, I strongly support the proposed OHV trail.

- 8) Plus as my husband is a retired Captain/First Responder & Wildland firefighter... we believe this is necessary to protect the environment and developments around. We relocated here to appreciate and utilize the forest areas... yet there are not as many accessible areas for us to walk or atv/side by side UTV ride as there are in Arizona. Many ATV roads/trails are short and do not connect.