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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing this as a father and a local resident. For years I have been shooting, both as a law enforcement officer and for recreation. My son, who is now at the age he can safely handle a firearm with adult supervision, enjoys coming with me. My daughter also enjoys shooting. We love this activity and do it as often as we can. As you are well aware, firearms and especially ammo are now very expensive. Due to our limited income, we cannot afford to go to an indoor range as they are very expensive. Living in the Conifer area, there is also no place close to go practice. Aside from this, we have had only amazing experiences every time we go. Each person we run into at this range is different, and they come from a variety of different backgrounds and races. Both myself and my family have made lasting relationships with people we have met there

We enjoy many activities in the national forests, and this is why we live here -- there are an abundance of different options.

While I realize that there are some times some undesirable effects of a public shooting range in the National forest, there are many of us who do our best to follow a "leave no trace" ethic when we attend this range. There are also many of us that routinely pick up after others who may not follow the same rules.

Of course, this happens with all types of activities. Similar to some of the campgrounds in the Arkansas Headwaters Rec Area, I'm asking that the NFS continue to allow volunteers like myself to police and provide environmental mitigation when needed.

We need this outdoor, sanctioned range for our own type of enjoyment, and prohibiting this activity, while allowing others is difficult to swallow to say the least. Yes, shooting leaves behind some undesirable items, but many, many people clean this up on a regular basis. Very few people mistreat this area. The majority of folks abide by the rules.

My other fear is that if this range were to close, we would see a marked negative impact to other areas that are not designated as a range. These areas already exist, but aren't patrolled or staffed by volunteers. The sound and effects, instead of being in a smaller, controllable place, will be much more widespread, resulting in what I believe will be an even greater negative effect on the forest.

Please keep this range open, and allow us, the owners of this federal land, to enjoy the activity we so enjoy, which blesses and enriches our lives.

Thank you,

Chad Smith