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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

I live within a few miles of the Pike National Forest in Pine, Colorado. I'm a retired deputy sheriff (33 years) and also spent 9 years as a CPW Park Ranger at Staunton State Park.

In 2019, I decided to hike the Colorado Trail. I started in Waterton Canyon and everything about the journey was awesome until I reached the portion of the trail near Kenosha Pass - close to US 285.

I found a great dispersed campsite among the aspens, a few miles east of Kenosha Pass, about 200 yards below the Colorado Trail. I had no idea at the time, but there was a forest service road about 500-600 yards below me. I was inside my tent getting ready to bed down when I heard the first round go off. As a retired peace officer, and a person who has shot thousands of rounds, I could tell I was located down range from the shooter. Then, more rounds. I started hearing the aspen tree limbs above and around me getting hit by projectiles. Rapid fire rounds, tree branches dropping upon and around my tent followed. I yelled to no avail, I walked down carefully waving my orange jacket and was able to get the two young men's attention. I explained to them I was tent camping just above their makeshift shooting range. They had no idea the Colorado Trail was on the side hill above them. They said, "We always shoot here" and apologized profusely.

The next morning as I was packing up my tent, someone else started shooting a shotgun below me. Needless to say, I quickly packed up and left. As I got cell phone connectivity I went onto the Colorado Trail Facebook page site and noticed that another hiker made a post about rounds striking trailside next to him as he was hiking through this same stretch. Others joined in the comments talking about their near misses with bullets striking nearby as they were hiking the Colorado Trail on this same stretch. I posted my story and the Executive Director of the CT, Bill Manning, acknowledged this problem.

Subsequently, I contacted the forest service office in Fairplay and the maintenance supervisor worked closely with me to post "NO SHOOTING" warning signs for those folks using the Forest Service Road below the trail. He was pretty sure the signs would be "shot up fairly quickly", but posted them anyway.

Kudos for setting up this meeting and I wanted to share this with you before the meeting so you could use this serious situation to define what's occurring out there. Like I told the Maintenance Foreman, one of these days someone is going to be killed while recreating on this portion of the Colorado Trail.

Thank You!