

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/2/2021 2:56:11 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am Colorado native and resident of the Monument and Palmer Lake area for over 30 years. I have hiked and biked the Pike for most of my adult life and raised my children to love the same activities in Pike National Forest. I have also lived here long enough to remember several near misses of errant bullets while hiking and biking in the Pike (the 'Wild West' days), so it is with great dismay, disappointment and grave concern that I have come to learn the NFS is considering opening the Pike, specifically the Palmer Lake Watershed area, to legal target shooting.

I have concerns about the logic of opening this area for shooting for the following reasons:

- 1) The obvious risk to adults and children hiking, biking, walking, birdwatching, etc., becoming injured or killed by errant bullets by target shooters whose aim is less than accurate and many of whom are under the influence of alcohol and other substances while shooting. And yes, this happens. I have seen this first hand more times that I can count.
- 2) The Palmer Lake watershed is already under serious threat due to increase in human traffic by foot, and damaging 4WD traffic, and the less discussed, but clearly indisputable threats of climate change, drought, and threats to biodiversity. These threats would be compounded by legal target shooting by adding more people (and their destructive 4WD's because they do NOT access target shooting areas on foot). This area cannot handle any more human activity. The land can't absorb it, nor the wildlife who struggle to survive for all the environmental reasons I have expressed.
- 3) The waste and destruction that comes from target shooting is untenable and inevitable. As I said, I have lived here for over 30 years. I have picked up more pounds of garbage from target shooters that I can remember. Shell casings are ALWAYS left behind. Garbage of every sort and nature, along with human waste, is also a given. These forms of waste impact our watershed and the wild animals who graze the land. Also inevitable is the destruction of trees, shrubs, and any nature of NFS signage (if there is any left) is also destroyed.
- 4) We lost a beloved member of our community, Tim Watkins, to a bullet(s). None of us have fully recovered from that event. The idea that would allow any person (s) possessing weapons that could intentionally or unintentionally mean we lose another community member, is unconscionable. We've lost enough in that regard and to bring in that risk, legally, is insanity.

There are myriad other reasons why allowing legal target shooting is an unthinkable idea for the Pike National Forest/Monument & Palmer Lake Watershed area. I have shared the ones I feel are most important to me, and I believe, my neighbors and friends who love this land as much as we love one another.

Please do not allow legal target shooting in the Pike. This area, the land, the animals are still trying to recover from prior years of destruction.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Regards,