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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

January 22, 2021

Re: Integrated Management of Target Shooting in the Pike National Forest

To Whom it May Concern:

The USFS states in promotional publications that "we focus on building strong RELATIONSHIPS with people and communities." Neighbors seem to take a back seat to paid lobbyists. Hopefully, the USFS will live up to its desire for enduring relationships by listening and responding to nearby residents.

First, I reject that the Turkey Tracks shooting area is the best site. It should be reduced or shut down, not expanded. Why is the largest proposed shooting facility in an area with residences on three sides? Trout Creek Ranches, Westcreek, Turkey Rock, Ridgewood and Rainbow Falls are all impacted. Traffic and use continues to increase. Increasing the size of the facility will naturally bring more traffic along single lane winding roads. Neighborhoods along SR 126, Hwy 67, Pine Creek Rd and North Platte River Road will all be impacted. None of these roads can safely accommodate high traffic volumes. Develop a large facility at Rocky Mtn Arsenal that is also on federal lands.

As a near-by homeowner that has seen and heard an exponential surge in shooting activity in the National Forest, I expect several issues to be solved now, not delayed for further problems.

Turkey Tracks

1. Safety The site must:

Be an actively supervised, safety permit and managed user fee site

THE USFS and Douglas County are well aware of the lawlessness that goes on at Turkey Tracks. The site should be supervised immediately and have an increased law enforcement presence. When dispersed shooting areas are closed and the shooting range has established rules, there will be those who ignore the rules. The only way to change that behavior is through strict enforcement. Putting on paper "increase law enforcement" doesn't make it happen. Where are the resources?

A USFS user safety permit must be required. When I hiked the Fiery Furnace in Arches, I had to watch a 20 minute video about the fragile environment before I could get a day use permit. This permit should require the 1st time user to demonstrate knowledge of gun safety and etiquette. There should be an accompanying daily use fee to pay for personnel and contribute to the cost incurred by the MCFD as well as the USFS.

Have only designated firing lanes, open shooting can not be sound mitigated

Be fire proofed against grass and brush fires.

My understanding is that fire mitigation was done in 2019. Fire is still a problem. The Mountain Community Fire Department (MCFD) responds on average to 10 Turkey Tracks calls annually. In 2020, they responded to 8 calls. Each visit is typically a 4-5 hour commitment of 10 men, 2-3 brush trucks and 1 tender/water truck.

Conservatively, that adds up to \$10,000 a year for our volunteer fire department.

Be closed during high wind or red flag alerts

A High Wind advisory or a red flag warning should shut the site down. The 2020 July 4th weekend had a red flag warning, Turkey Tracks was open and there was a fire.

Not allow alcohol

Not allow exploding targets, semi-automatic or automatic weapons

Have set hours. (9-6 or dark whichever comes first) No night shooting. This would help law enforcement and improve safety and sound issues.

Have turn lanes at the entrance and designated parking with severe ticketing for violations

Have a reservation system to ensure that the site is not overcrowded

2. Sound

Be engineered so that no sound travels more than ½ mile from the site.

The site should be no larger or extensive than can be successfully engineered for ½ mile sound mitigation. I can hear gunfire inside my home with all the windows closed. Forget relaxing outside. There are area residents that suffer from PTSD from their military service. Daily rampant recreational gunfire is NOT acceptable!

3. Environmental Damage

Trash is immense! This is another reason for it to be a supervised site AND have a user fee. Porta potties and trash receptacles must be installed and maintained.

Dispersed Shooting

The area between Turkey Tracks and Rainbow Falls, Trout Creek Ranches and Westcreek, must be permanently closed to dispersed shooting with extensive signage. I have walked on the ATV trails adjacent to Trout Creek Ranches and heard close by gunfire and seen an active hunters blind. It took Douglas County Sheriff's Department 3 hours to investigate and get back to me. Of course the shooter was gone by then. In general, the regulations should be 1 mile from ANY residence or other multi-user area. I know behavior management. When areas are closed to dispersed shooting, you can expect an increase in dispersed shooting initially. The only way to change the behavior is to have strict enforcement.

In summary, Turkey Tracks should only be open and improved IF the problem indicator measures are ALL successfully addressed and solved. The neighboring residential areas have been in existence for decades. Recreational shooting should not negatively impact a resident's daily quality of life or financial holdings?

Sincerely,

Linda Dewey