

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/10/2021 7:08:43 PM

First name: Herb

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Good morning.

I am a land and homeowner about 1.5 miles north and east of Turkey Tracks (TT) in the Trout Creek Falls subdivision. I am a disabled veteran, recently retired state employee (going on 6 years). My wife and I purchased this property for its beauty, solitude and peaceful setting...up until the last 3-4 years. Each day, week, month and now years the noise, traffic, trash dumping, hazardous materials dumping, fires and explosions have become unbearable. From our home, we hear daily gunfire and gunfire at all hours of the night. Nearly every single day. I have PTSD related to serving in the military. My quality of life and overall physical and mental health have taken a huge downturn. I have weekly mental health appointments through the VA for the PTSD but my symptoms and daily suffering have greatly increased in direct proportion to the escalation of gunfire, explosions, fires and illegal activities at Turkey Tracks.

Why is this illegal activity allowed to continue?

My wife is employed at a small store in Woodland Park. There have been shoppers enter her store, some active duty military, asking for directions to TT and where to purchase alcohol. Her store doesn't sell alcohol. What are active duty military doing on a private range when the local military bases have numerous ranges for private use? What I've discovered myself or through comments from our local government officials is that the military personnel are one of the biggest problems with them using explosive devices including explosive targets. There are also people who use TT to bring trash. Often they dispose of old appliances, toilets and propane tanks to use as target practice. I understand from local officials that large propane tanks have been shot causing a fire and an obvious loud explosion that can be heard quite clearly in our neighborhood. As I write this correspondence the gunfire at TT is clearly audible INSIDE MY HOME WITH THE VOLUME TURNED UP ON MY TV. What kind of peace and happiness is that? In my own home?

We literally cannot have any quality of life when I'm waiting minute by minute for yet another explosion or high powered gunfire. My anxiety level is always high because moment by moment I will hear activity of some sort even as far away as our property is from TT. The loud noises cause me to immediately jump and have a panic attack. How would anyone react in a neighborhood where you would hear gunfire day and night?

This TT issue is a problem for many of us. Just a few years ago a man was killed across highway 67 (east) from TT by a stray bullet. This death was never solved. I understand from Douglas County Sheriff that two homes and/or vehicles were hit by stray bullets

west of TT. In addition the ladies who own the store in Woodland Park where my wife works have property directly west of TT. They have lost at least one bull cow from stray bullets and the landowners cannot walk their own property as they have had bullets buzzing by them. How is that acceptable? Is it going to take someone being shot or killed by stray bullets being fired over the hill in a westerly direction? There are ATV trails in this direction as well.

I've noted that there is a stop sign at the exit from TT. This stop sign is riddled with bullet holes, which means that someone is shooting in an easterly direction ACROSS A HIGHLY TRAVELED HIGHWAY! These rounds of bullets are being shot into an area where there are numerous ATV trails. Locals and visitors to this area walk/hike in direct line-of-fire from anyone shooting across highway 67. Someone else is going to get shot and/or killed. Families including children and pets are in the line-of-fire. Any future gun injuries or deaths will be blood on the hands of those who will allow TT to continue.

How much tax money is being expended by government agencies managing TT? Who pays for the cost to respond to fires, explosions, illegal activities and cleanup? A local agency and some volunteers bring a roll-off dumpster to clean up the trash. If it's hazardous materials most likely a government agency is tasked with cleanup. Numerous modifications have been made by government agencies to TT. This is paid by tax dollars that could be spent on improvements for ALL that use our properties, not just a select few that are causing the problems.

Just two or three years ago my wife and I were going home from Woodland Park when we were stopped by emergency vehicles at TT. A group of Army Special Forces were using TT and one member shot himself in the upper leg. Fortunately these personnel were trained in combat first aid and the guy survived fortunately with a ride on the medical helicopter. Incidents like this are concerning and cause greater mental stress and anxiety, especially someone like myself that has PTSD and high anxiety. I've seen way too many injuries, suffering and death to be faced with this same stuff when I'm trying to live out the rest of my years. I'm confident, and have heard similar concerns, from neighbors, friends and officials that are involved in TT.

Don't get me wrong, I'm a lifetime gun owner. I own numerous firearms and reload my ammunition. I was taught by my father to be responsible and safe around firearms but I purposely DO NOT use TT out of respect of local landowners and people who use the areas around TT for pleasure.

In short, our family would like to see TT shut down completely. There are so many other REMOTE areas on government property NOT located in such close proximity to landowners, homes, livestock and citizens that are forced to hear and see all the disruption of the TT.

I would encourage those who are advocating this TT to spend a few days and nights at our home. We would be happy to put you up at our house to observe and experience this disruption of peace and quiet and a very reduced quality of life, depreciation of our property values and the concerns of being shot or killed by stray bullets. We can no longer walk/hike or ride our ATV's anywhere outside our lots in the national forest. The TT has caused an additional problem with users of the forest and even local homeowners now that shoot even in the non-shooting areas of the national forest surrounding this area. I've walked or ridden my ATV to the trails behind our home and south toward TT to find trash, expended ammunition/brass as well as water tanks, trees and structures with bullet holes in them. Water tanks for grazing livestock scattered all over the forest have been shot up and landowners forced to repair or replace these. The TT attracts law breakers just like drugs on the street attract bad people. And the problems are escalating. We cannot enjoy going out of our home to sit on the deck, in our yard or anywhere near our home without hearing the gunfire. It's not safe and the noise and fear are unbearable.

In closing, I'm writing this on my laptop and cannot send photos/videos from this device. I will attempt to send the photos/videos from my cell phone which contains the photos in a second response