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First name: Al

Last name: Lowande

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have hiked to the Blue Lakes basin in the Sneffels Wilderness a number of times over the years but, frankly, I have no interest in visiting anymore because of the overuse and abuse it has suffered the last few years. The sheer number of hikers that use the area every day makes it a cruel joke on anyone expecting solitude or untrammelled beauty. The wildflowers and other vegetation has been trampled into countless unauthorized trails. The amount of toilet paper( and what goes with it) is disgusting. Judging by the number of backpackers camping there even on a weekday, and doing some simple multiplication, I am confident that a season must produce over 1000 "catholes". In such a small area, that is simply mind-boggling. Since my household drinking water comes from the outlet stream, I obviously am doubly appalled at this situation.

Since the vast majority of the human waste comes from backpackers doing their morning "constitutional", I feel that the area should be off limits to overnight camping. At the very least, we need a permit system with a VERY limited number of campers and a requirement to carry out waste. The campers also contribute inordinately to the destruction of vegetation.

Although day hikers have less impact per capita, the sheer number of them screams for a limit to their number each day as well, probably again through a permit system. I realize that such decisions are sometimes initially unpopular, but, I believe anyone who has been there recently clearly understands the need for more active management. And social media, which has created much of this problem, will fortunately be part of the solution in getting the word out.

I imagine there are other places in the GMUG that suffer similar overuse and abuse(Crested Butte area comes to mind) and also need more protection. I think the Forest Service needs to be more nimble and proactive in dealing with the management of such areas before the degradation becomes irreversible( at Blue Lakes, I think it already has crossed that line).

Thank you for considering my comments.