Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/26/2021 11:00:00 AM
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Comments: GMUG Forest Plan

From an outsider looking in, I believe it is obvious that one facet of dispersed recreation management needs to be scrutinized and corrective action be taken.

My concern is the lack of management that has allowed the proliferation of mountain bike trails. I realize the mtn bike club is a good partner and that relationship needs to continue. However, the land management agency is responsible for the determination of where and how many miles are needed. These decisions should not be dictated by the whims of untrained individuals who do not consider the other resources, naturally their agenda is to further and promote their activity.

The tail is wagging the dog. Unfortunately it appears that the employees who are responsible for making the decisions have found it too easy to let the clubs locate and put trails in places that should never have been allowed. That is not management, it is just some employees who ego to be well liked cloud their decision making and results in dereliction of their duty to the agency and public.

My suggestion would be to put a moritorium in effect to stop all new trail construction. Conduct an inventory of all existing trails and rate them using the ROS (Recreation Opportunity Spectrum) guidelines. Install trail counters and trail cameras and conduct interviews at trail heads and parking lots. When this information is gathered and

categorized, you will know how many users you are planning for and how many miles of trail are needed. Then and only then consider allowing new trails to be added, under the control of the land managers.

Additionaly, with the gathered information it will provide the land manager with the knowledge of what size to build the parking lots to meet the needs to satisfy the determination of the ROS. When the lot is full it means the objective is being met and limits the amount of use for that given time.

To make this a workable, universal program it would require setting up a task force to coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management and try to convince them to buy into this concept.

Another suggestion to think about would be to educate the biking community to the value of registration fees. When we started the OHV registration fee program there were many sceptics, but soon they realized the value far outweighed the slight pain of paying. Over the past 30 years it has provided 60+ million$ back to the forests to maintain the trail systems. Annually, a large portion goes to the GMUG.

This is very brief, if you want more input please contact me.

Dale Bittle