

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/18/2022 1:33:55 AM

First name: Reilly

Last name: Anderson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the preliminary environmental assessment for the proposed Redstone to McClure Pass trail.

I would like to express my opposition to the proposed trail for the following reasons:

First, I am concerned about the potential impacts to wildlife from the added recreation pressure of this new trail, particularly elk, which have been declining precipitously in our region. While seasonal closures are an important management tool to protect wildlife from recreation impacts, the Forest Service hasn't taken a hard look at how much recreation would be expected to increase from designating a new trail and whether those impacts would outweigh the benefits of a seasonal closure.

Second, I'm concerned about the consequences of overuse. This trail will undoubtedly increase the number of visitors to the relatively small and confined area of the Crystal River Valley. Much like the Maroon Bells, Conundrum Hot Springs, Hanging Lake, and the "Four Pass Loop"-which have all been forced to resort to fees, reservations and lottery systems because of the increased demand-this trail will make the Crystal River Valley overly crowded and congested. With this congestion comes the inevitable surge of trash and litter, rogue trails, and illegal camping. More people always create more problems. And the solutions to these problems are always more fees and tedious reservation systems. The Crystal River Valley needs to be left wild and free, like it always has been.

Lastly, the Forest Service must revise its environmental analysis to address the following:

- E-bikes cannot be permitted on any segment of the trail. The proposal to allow e-bikes on portions of the trail but not others is an unenforceable management situation.
- Bighorn sheep recovery efforts are underway in the Crystal Valley, and this trail could impair those efforts.
- Impacts on Canada lynx, peregrine falcons, and wetland ecosystems are not adequately addressed or mitigated in the environmental assessment.

Thank you for considering my comments.