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Comments: David, and everyone

I appreciate the opportunity to give more input on our operation in the Granite area as well as what we see with the public and their habits in that area.

We usually try to begin clearing trail up Granite Creek the middle part of June and reach our camp site location. Some years it's later depending on snow melt. (Tim works well with us also on this and anytime there are major tree jams due to avalanches that has blocked the trail or large trees that have fallen Tim and his crew help clear those areas. Huge shout out to Tim for all he does!)

We usually start setting our camp late June as we book pack trips after July 1st. The water level mid June is usually really high and crossing Granite Creek down by the hot springs is not a safe option as you would probably would not make it, (probably drown) trying to cross it on a horse. This is not an option. Usually by mid July the river has gone down enough that it is safe to start crossing the river down by the hot springs. Without the ability to use the trail from the falls to the bridge at the hot springs we would be forced to ride the road with our pack strings and go through the hot springs parking lot. Trying to get a pack string and stock through the crowded parking lot with vehicles, people, and dogs does not work. Several years ago this trail was put into bypass the parking lot and it has solved the issue. But, each year Granite Creek and especially the hot springs gets busier and busier with more people and traffic. Trying to take stock past the hot springs during summer and fall is very stressful. We have had a few incidents at the hot springs with our pack strings and also with guests on horses. Trying to time it to cross the bridge when pedestrians are not crossing is a chore. Kids running towards you packing a floating alligator isn't fun when you're on a horse and have guests and pack strings. (The stock thinks the alligator is real and going to eat them and they spook.) I feel that it is only a matter of time before someone is seriously injured at this location. Again, each year it gets busier and busier with more people at the hot springs. It's also very dangerous riding past the outhouses. When someone runs out of the outhouse and the door flies open it scatters the stock every time. The trail goes within feet of the outhouse buildings and the picnic tables. This is a bottle neck and a tight area for anyone going past the hot springs. Hikers, outfitters or the public users out for a ride or pack trip or hunting trip.

This past year halfway through the season there was a bunch of building material (lumber) that was stacked just off the trail on the opposite side of the outhouses at the hot springs. They had covered the material with white tarps and when the wind was blowing the tarps would be flapping in the wind. We had several wrecks at this spot last fall with our stock not wanting to go past the outhouses on one side and tarps flapping in the wind on the other side. Bottle neck. I took a picture of this last fall but unfortunately I can't find it at this time.

We start taking trips with guest up Granite the first part of July and we continually go up the canyon until after we

are done hunting later part of October so we spend a lot of time in the area.

The trail we use at this time goes past the Granite Creek campground, through the parking lot at the falls, around and past the hot springs parking lot, then over to the bridge and past the hot springs. I have seen over the years that people camping at the camp ground have been using the trail to hike to the hot springs. They hike up the trail through the falls parking lot and use the bypass trail to hike to the hot springs. People parking at the falls also use this trail to hike to the hot springs. This trail is used by both stock, and pedestrians accessing the hot springs. Without this trail everyone will be forced to ride or hike up the road and through the parking lot. Most people don't want to hike nor ride along the road as it is dusty when cars go past.

This past summer I asked to look at an alternative route to get around the hot springs as it has gotten to that point. Jessica, Tim, and I hiked the area and found the route which is proposed for this project. I think that it would be great to have an alternative route to bypass all that is going on at the hot springs. But, the original trail that is in use now by passing the parking lot at the hot springs needs to be in place to have the option of crossing the bridge during high water season. As much as the new bypass route would be of great benefit I would rather keep the original trail in place as it does at least give us the ability to access the area during high water.

Another benefit to the bypass trail going around the hot springs is during the fall months. The last few years the months of September and some of October seem almost as busy at the hot springs as July and August. When we pack our clients and their harvest past the hot springs we have gotten negative comments and nasty looks about hunting and taking animals that are loaded on our pack strings. It's kinda like coming out of the wilderness backcountry from a remote experience and riding through Disney land (the hot springs) on your way to the trailhead. I think the bypass trail would be a better experience for everyone hunters and hot spring users. But having the ability to use the bridge and parking lot bypass trail during high water is very important to our operation and any public wanting to ride up Granite Creek during the high water time of year.

Thanks for your time on this issue and if you have any questions feel free to reach out to me.