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Comments: As a public land user and employee of a conservation non-profit my concerns about the overuse and degradation of the Pinnacles area of Buffalo Gap National Grassland echo those of the Forest Service. This is a difficult issue pressing many public land agencies all over the country, and there is no simple solution. How do you balance protecting the land and wildlife while still encouraging folks to share in the wonders of spending time outside?

Offering Leave No Trace Ethics education through workshops, literature and information kiosks is one way that partners organization can specifically support the Forest Service to protect this high-use area, but it is only one tool. I believe that more direct and drastic actions need to be taken, including limiting access and tightening off-road restrictions. This will help prevent future degradation and allow for the restoration of already impacted areas. If the Pinnacles area is developed, folks will find another area, and the problem will continue, so limiting access, especially in areas of high concern for wildlife across the grassland would be imperative.

Other potential actions I am in favor of include:

*Limiting how many nights campers can stay-is there a way that the FS can manage this?

*Offering designated sites and blocking off areas that need restoration or that are open to grazing

*A kiosk or information center where campers check-in and learn about the area and Leave No Trace Ethics

*A day-use parking lot, with vault toilets

*Is there another area where a campground can be created? There are not many options for camping with amenities beyond what is available from Badlands NP. Perhaps this would help lessen the effects on Pinnacles?

I know that all of these potential solutions take time and money and I am thankful that Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands is spending time to develop a solution.

Sincerely,

Andrea Fountain