

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/23/2023 2:29:28 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I appreciate the effort that the Forest Service is completing to determine the best use for the Jackson Mountain area. I am in complete agreement with expanding and improving the trail system through a partnership with IMBA. I also agree with the trailhead improvements. These improvements will increase recreational usage of the area, and improve the lives of locals and visitors alike.

I understand that gravel pits and similar facilities are required to support roads, infrastructure, etc. and I try not to have a "not in my backyard" mentality on issues like this. My two main concerns with the gravel pit are traffic and disruption of natural beauty.

1) Traffic - East 160 is already one of the most traveled roads in the area, especially during ski season. Even without the extra gravel traffic, we witness a fair amount of "near misses" on this stretch of road. There is no turn lane, drivers tend to speed through this area, and sun blindness occurs during both morning and evening times. My concern is that truck traffic would only worsen the problem, creating a bigger safety hazard.

2) Natural Beauty - the stretch of East Hwy 160 from Pagosa to Wolf Creek Pass is recognized as one of the prettiest drives in the state, if not the country. Additionally, the pristine trails in the Jackson Mountain area are magnificent, both in views and in peacefulness. My concern is that additional truck traffic and a gravel pit would take away from the world class natural beauty of this place.

There seem to be better spots in Pagosa and Archuleta County to locate such a pit. Examples include County Road 500 on the way to the landfill or even locations off of Piedra road. Both of these areas are less populated, less trafficked, and would provide the ability to hide the gravel pit so that it is less intrusive. After having read information about the site selection process, it feels like locating the gravel pit on Jackson Mountain is the most convenient option, and not necessarily the best option.

Thank you for your consideration.

Thanks,

Tony DiCuffa