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First name: thompson

Last name: bishop

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To the USDA and Pitkin County,

My wife and I own property which is contiguous with the proposed path between Redstone and McClure. We have lived here since June 2016, and hope to grow old in our home here.

I do not concur with the statement of "no significant impact", and am thus writing again to object to the building of this path. Given the many other objections, I will keep this highly focused on the few hundred feet of our property which will be affected by the expansion of the highway-to-path surface westward along the Elk Mountain subdivision. Even more specific, I would like to bring attention to the beautiful evergreen and cottonwood trees in the space between our property line and the highway 133 easement.

I hereby object to any removal of said trees and destruction to the ecosystem of our home forest. As an avid environmentalist, here is what I know: squirrels, pine marten, chickadee, blue jay, and juncos live and move through those trees everyday. I have watched a mother goose sit on her eggs on an island in the river plain right across from there. Regularly, we awake here to deer lying in our wild, conservation-easement yard on the south side.

Any removal of these trees will affect these animals and birds. Any widening of the highway to add a path will create an additional barrier for the deer and other wildlife---who walk through our yard, or from Pitkin Open Space (by the drool)---to access water. I have spent countless hours sitting by that river, watching the beavers swim and the dippers play.

We own an additional 30-acre lot connected to Pitkin County Open Space by the Drool, and regularly see bear, deer, and elk up on the high lot. We also know of mountain lions who are nearby; we have both photographic evidence and, in winter, see their footprints often.

This is our objection to this proposed multi-use path and to a ruling of 'no significant impact.' Adding this trail will erode the already devastated wild community of forest dwellers, and create additional barriers for the major fauna who move through this landscape. Research-driven science shows that, unequivocally, habitat loss is a major driver of species degradation. Please reconsider driving a nonlocal agenda through our backyard.

In kindness, thompson