

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/15/2023 2:00:01 AM

First name: Jeff

Last name: Hess

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing in opposition to the proposed Redstone to McClure pass trail as the Environmental Assessment fails to evaluate the overall impacts of the total proposed trail from Carbondale to Crested Butte. It would be detrimental to the Crystal River valley to build a trail system such as this in the proposed location. Any proposed bike trail should run in the right of way of Highway 133 to avoid further impacts to the forest and wildlife. This makes the most sense given the wide variety of existing trails in the area. New trails are further degrading the environment and fragmenting critical wildlife habitat.

Secondly, please put in place a seasonal closure on the current trails in the area for wintering wildlife. I was disappointed to see the quid pro quo based on the approval of the proposed trail segment regarding the seasonal closure referenced. This winter range is integral to the vitality of our wildlife and overall environment. Winter recreationists are almost certainly contributing to an increase in the mortality of wildlife and a seasonal closure should be put in place immediately to prevent further loss.

In the summer the proposed trail location provides refuge for a diverse amount of flora and fauna which are integral to the health of our ecosystem; surely we can agree that opening this area up to more recreation will only serve to eliminate this. Although it may not be popular, the needs of wildlife and the environment should be the leading factor for land managers when considering new trail systems.

The Forest Service has a mission statement; OUR MISSION:

To sustain the health, diversity,  
and productivity of the Nation's  
forests and grasslands to meet  
the needs of present and future

generations. This is an opportunity to do just this and not approve this segment of trail. Thank you for allowing me to voice my opposition to this trail segment as proposed and my support for a current seasonal closure on the trails in place for wintering wildlife.