

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/23/2023 2:54:20 PM

First name: Lisa

Last name: Jensen

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I may be the only person in our community opposing the mountain bike trail system. The proposed trail system and gravel pit are in the middle of a crucial elk migration corridor and elk habitat. Studies have shown that as few as five to seven interactions with an elk cow with calf and a human can cause the cow to abandon her calf. We all know that elk herds are in serious decline in our region, mostly due to loss of habitat.

It appears the US Forest Service has chosen an area for the proposed gravel pit that will minimize impact on elk habitat and migration. I don't know how much the gravel pit operations, i.e. noise, traffic and disruption to the landscape will impact elk. I do know that interactions with people on mountain bikes will be detrimental to the elk population.

In principle, I am opposed to the mountain bike trail system because of how the mountain bike advocates have come to propose this project. They admit they have been "poaching" trails, i.e. using this area illegally, for years. The argument goes, so we might as well allow them to use it and build a proper trail system now. This is not an ethical nor proper way to seek recreation areas.

My main concern is wildlife habitat. A proposed mountain bike trail system anywhere in Archuleta County is not compatible with protecting wildlife habitat.

Thank you.