

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/3/2023 7:22:04 PM

First name: Susan

Last name: Greiner

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USFS Land Managers,

Thank you for creating this vehicle-based dispersed camping study and plan. Your attention to the problems created by recent growth in vehicle-based recreational use is extremely important and appreciated.

Thank you also for the opportunity to comment on the Dispersed Camping Management planning process and the USFS Proposed Alternative.

I am a long time resident of Buena Vista and have watched the growth of outdoor recreation in the valley since the mid-1980s. My husband and I owned Wilderness Aware, a whitewater rafting company here for 34 years. We are now retired, and I have volunteered with Envision Chaffee County and the Recreation in Balance Task Force. My husband works with the Rec Adopters Program and has been in charge of inventorying vehicle-based campsites in Lake and Chaffee Counties, a task which I have helped him with on many occasions.

First, I would like to say that your Proposed Action looks to be on the right track. As much as we would all prefer dispersed camping to be unregulated, the recent increase in the amount of use and resource damage dictate that designating campsites is the way to go in many places. The areas you are proposing to designate campsites look entirely appropriate, and your heatmap is particularly useful in showing where use is particularly concentrated. The locations for proposed developed campgrounds seem appropriate as well.

In addition, the criteria you have outlined for determining adaptive management seem good. I am very glad to see that even though you have the goal of protecting and providing for all types of use on the forest lands, you consider wildlife habitat and health as part of that objective.

I would like to comment on the closure of campsites within 100 feet of water sources. Your charts indicate that the Lake Ann Road is the only place currently marked for closure of campsites too close to the water source. I have seen the situation on the Lake Ann Road, and I agree that this course of action is warranted. However, I would like to encourage you to be very discerning where you mitigate campsites within 100 feet of water sources in other parts of the Forest. It is very important to prevent impacts on vegetation that lead to erosion into water sources, human waste too close to water, and impacts on wildlife access to water and riparian areas. But, because people value camping near water, it may be worth considering trying to keep some sites near water open in some popular areas. Otherwise, I worry that some campers may break the rules and cause even more damage by camping near the water illegally or create new campsites in other riparian areas.

Finally, thank you for your consideration of human waste issues. While installing toilet facilities is a good solution in many areas, I also recognize the significant cost for installation and in cleaning and maintaining these facilities. So, where installing toilet facilities isn't feasible, you might want to also consider requiring people to have their own portable toilets to pack out their human and dog waste. There are many portable toilet options available for people to buy for a reasonable cost. Private and commercial rafting trips already require portable toilets. Wag bags don't seem to be a great solution, though, as many people don't carry them out, but rather leave them in the toilet facilities or next to the road. Education about what to do with human waste is clearly needed.

Thank you again for allowing public comment and for all your work on this Vehicle-Based Dispersed Camping Management plan and for your careful management of the Pike-San Isabel National Forest.

Sincerely,

Susan Greiner