Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/15/2023 2:56:17 PM
First name: Bridget
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: I Support Dispersed Vehicle Based Camping in Leadville and Salida Districts

Dear Leadville District Ranger:

I recreate on public lands and believe it is important to have continued access to do so. I am writing regarding the dispersed camping management plan on the Leadville and Salida districts. I believe these designations will greatly hinder access and recreation opportunities on public land. It seems that many of the problems occurring could be solved through active management rather than closures.

Primitive, free, dispersed camping is a highly valuable form of recreation on public land, and reservation-only systems should only be used to expand upon abundant primitive camping experiences instead of replacing them. There are solutions to the current problems of human waste and trash and the USFS should explore all possibilities. I also believe the standard 14 day camping limit should be the management rule in these districts. I am also concerned that this proposal punishes those who have practiced leave no trace principles. Campsites will be designated by a clear sign of use. This will discourage users across public lands from camping responsibly and following leave no trace principles.

I support adding additional campgrounds as is in the proposed action for those who want those type of camping experiences, however, providing a true, primitive dispersed camping opportunity for those who also want it is very important. The USFS should not cite user conflict as a reason for restricting use for only particular user groups. The claimed user created routes should be added into the forest road system as there is a purpose and need for these routes to accommodate growing numbers of users. There is already a limited number of routes within these districts so no routes should be closed or just closed to VBDC.

USFS is setting themselves up for future problems by hardwiring where dispersed camping will be allowed. As needs and trends change the USFS should be able to adapt to adequately meet the needs of users and fulfill the overall goals of USFS. Designated campsites and concentration camping greatly hinder the outdoor recreation experience. Although some may prefer a designated campsite, I believe all users should be able to have the opportunity to find a remote place to camp in order to connect with nature. The physical and mental benefits of outdoor recreation are crucial to providing a healthy society. The USFS must do all in its power to protect these opportunities for users.

The USFS must also consider how this will affect local economies. Outdoor recreation has grown tremendously in the past few years and looks to continue to increase in popularity. Restricting access will affect local communities ability to maximize the economic benefits. This will hinder businesses that rely on this income and there needs to be an alternative that more thoroughly addresses this concern.

Sincerely,

Bridget Karlin
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