

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/10/2023 3:40:18 PM

First name: Joe

Last name: Long

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I Support Dispersed Vehicle Based Camping in Leadville and Salida Districts

Dear Salida District Ranger:

I wish to comment on the proposed Dispersed Camping changes being considered for the Leadville and Salida Ranger Districts. As an avid OHV enthusiast, I frequently take my dirt bike in my small Toy Hauler for several days of camping/off-road riding in the National Forest. And dispersed camping is my preference, because you can 'usually' find a location that allows you some degree of privacy to experience the solitude that we all seek. I have been riding and camping in Colorado for over 50 years. And, I have experienced first-hand the changes that have occurred. Especially in the last few years with the influx of newcomers into the National Forest. And, I can say without a doubt, that many have no respect for this national resource. Understanding that a few low-life's that abuse the privilege of enjoying this national resource, can ruin the experience for all, I support some changes in the current dispersed camping rules.

I believe dispersed camping in the National Forest is a privilege that should be maintained. But I also believe that it is a privilege that needs to be managed closely to prevent (and punish) those that would abuse it. To that end, I support permits and use fees for dispersed camping that have a location and time limit. The location would be marked dispersed camping sites, and the duration would be 5 days at the maximum. Campers would have to vacate the dispersed camping site after their stay (a maximum of 5 days) had ended. They would not be allowed to extend their stay, nor would they be allowed to have the same vehicles, and/or campers, and/or tents occupying the marked space beyond their time limit. We need to prevent the scenario where Bob reserves Site X for a week, then Sally his wife reserves the same site for the following week, then Timmy (their son) reserves the same site for another week - and so on. These types of people are abusing the system and they prevent other users from enjoying the national resource. Many of the new bushwhacked sites are a result of squatters taking over the more established dispersed sites, forcing other users to seek new locations to camp. Limiting the duration to 5 days will prevent squatters from making the National Forest their Spring, Summer, and Fall home. The fees would be high enough to offset the increased management and enforcement. Perhaps a Dispersed Camping Host that manages the dispersed camping area. Or increased patrols by Forest Service personnel. Either way, the fees would fund the management and enforcement efforts. In addition, every reservation would have a \$500.00 clean-up fee associated with it. This fee would be deducted at the time of the reservation, and would be 100% refundable after the site had been vacated and whomever was responsible for enforcement indicated that the site was in the same (or near) condition as when the campers first arrived. Again, we have to prevent those that abuse the privilege from turning the dispersed camping sites into trash and/or sewer pits. Pack your trash, bury your human waste (if you cannot carry it out in a Black Tank) and leave the area ready for the next users. If not, pay the price for someone else to clean up after you.

It is sad that today's respectful youths will probably never experience the true freedoms of dispersed camping that I enjoyed in my youth. But, with proper planning, management, and enforcement, they will still be able to camp in the National Forest's in relative solitude without having to step around someone else's trash and human waste.

Sincerely

Joe Long

Sincerely,

Joe Long  
2285 Montebello Drive West  
Colorado Springs, CO 80918