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First name: Ann

Last name: Ewing

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Historically, dispersed camping in the Chalk Creek canyon was prohibited along with campfires. The reasons for the prohibition have not changed other than the continuing lack of a Forest Service presence in that area. Proximity to Chalk Creek leaves the water way open to damage by campers and Off-Highway vehicles users. Dispersed campsites are limited in that area and risks trespass by campers on private property. Invariable, campers will have campfires even though regulations may prohibit them. The potential for a catastrophic wildfire occurring in the canyon is highly likely with the lack of enforcement by the Forest Service.

The threat of wildfire to homes and historic St. Elmo should be a prime consideration when considering allowing dispersed camping. Allowing dispersed camping will only increase the numbers of visitors to the area and in turn increases the amount of resource damage, wildfire risk and damage to the ecosystem of Chalk Creek.

I am very familiar with this area as I am a retired Forest Service employee who worked in developed Recreation for the Salida District. I spent many hours educating the public and issuing violation notices for resource damage, sanitation issues and campfire violations in the Chalk Creek area. This occurred in the 1990's and the sheer numbers of visitors has increased tremendously. The historic concerns with managing the area have not changed. Chalk Creek canyon is one of the most beautiful places in Colorado but it is being "loved to death".