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Comments: I went to the proposal open house in Ridgway and I was told by some of the rangers I should put some of my questions in writing. I have spent the last 15 years hiking, climbing, and skiing in the Sneffels range on every peak and drainage. The most changes I have seen to the area have been because of camping by the lakes and the parking at the trailhead.

Permit implementing dates

Personally I think the May 1st start date on permits is a little early and should be more flexible based on snow and other factors. Most years on May 1st there is too much snow to even drive to the trailhead. I have been to trailhead in mid May and I was the only person there. I would watch people show up walk 200 feet only to realize the trail was covered in snow then leave. The best time to do the permitting would be just before memorial day to just after Labor day or the end of September. I am worried the permits are going to fill up fast for June, July, August, and September and be mostly open for May because of the snow loads. People will see that and show up unprepared just because it was the only time they could get a permit. That could lead to people getting in over their head and push it farther than they should. The lakes are usually clear of snow in early July which is when more people come because the photos are better.

How were the boundaries of the areas made? Was it by watershed or by usage? Most of the traffic is concentrated to mostly the blue lakes trail and that is what sees the most overuse.

Have you thought more about how to check the permits or what about if people cross through the permitted area but are nowhere near the lakes or the trail. Would they get ticketed or would that be up to the rangers discretion? I spend a lot of time climbing peaks out there and to get back I usually cross through what you have designated as the blue lakes zone. I rarely ever see any people out there besides at the lake but I know quite a few people climb Dallas peak from the Telluride side. The ascent route takes them into the blue lakes zone for a little bit. Also not very often but sometimes hunters park at the trailhead and then just go hunt in the Wilderness. Usually they aren't on trails but they do sometimes cross into the lower East Dallas zone and sometimes the Blue lakes zone.

An idea of how to combat that could be to shrink the blue lakes area. Where you have it now makes sense because it is just the ridgeline all around but almost half the area on the west side by S4-S6 and West Dallas no one goes up there. For example the original summit register from 1934 is still on top of S4 and there are only 116 entries ever. I have climbed S6 once a year for 3 years and there were no new entries in that time. An alternative could be to draw the blue lakes area from the start of the Wollcott ridge and follow tree line to the summit of S4 then across to the Notch between West Dallas and Dallas then follow the ridgeline all the way around to Sneffels. This would basically cut out what we locals call Desert basin on the Northeast side of T0 and also what we call the S6 basin. Both those basins are over 80% scree with very little alpine vegetation so it would be very hard to find any evidence that people have been up there and no one ever really does anyways. That is just an idea that would shrink the blue lakes to the areas it really needs it and make it much easier for your backcountry rangers to check permits because they have a smaller area to check but it is a more arbitrary line than a ridge line. Or make it so if the rangers see a person on the scree up there they give them a stern warning instead of a ticket?

Wag bags

I think it is a great idea to require Wag bags for overnight campers but have you thought about how to enforce that. People pooping near water sources and not burying it is a big problem near that basin. Just go to blue lakes pass and head 20 feet south and you will see poop everywhere I have personally gone up there with a shovel and a bucket to clean it up. Also if you walk in the trees by the lake you can see a lot of Toilet paper everywhere. It should be talked about a lot while people are getting their permit because a lot of people forget them. I know in places like Aspen and Lone Peak Cirque by Salt Lake there are groups that donate Wag bags and have a kiosk at

trailhead with them in it for people to grab. It could be something to look into along with a donation box for them? Another concern is what people do with the Wag bags after use, not many people want to put them in their cars after they have been used. It could be worth putting a wag bag disposal bin near the new trash cans that is not for trash just wag bags.