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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am a veteran who has lived in the Trout Creek subdivision just north of the Turkey Tracks shooting range for almost 30 years. When we moved out here the area was pristine and quiet, as you would expect a subdivision bordering a national forest to be. There was shooting in the forest back thirty years ago, but it was occasional and random. Mostly on weekends, there would be some shots fired, but maybe fifteen minutes later it would stop. This has changed in recent years with the increased popularity of the Turkey Tracks range. Now the shooting is constant, all day long and it occurs every day of the week, not just weekends any more. It also occurs late into the night most evenings during the spring, summer and fall. The shots aren't just shotguns, rifles or pistols any more. There are a lot of automatic weapons, and larger weapons that sound like a cannon going off. Then there is the night-time shooters, who have to be using tracer rounds, because no one can see what they're shooting at or if they hit it with regular ammunition. These aren't typical hunters or sportsmen shooting targets and it's disturbing to many of us who live so close.

The noise and the anxiety related to this facility is extremely disturbing to me personally. I have had anxiety issues for a few years, but my issues increased and expanded into PTSD and agoraphobia. I'm very much aware of the situation and while I know that my home is basically not at physical risk from the firearms, it still upsets me and can cause mood-swings and anger issues related to the continuous gun shots. The issues I experienced initially grew, along with the noise pollution from the shooting range. Because the severity of these issues, and the fact they developed into debilitating problems. I have had to seek mental health care through the Veterans Administration (VA). While I would love to see this shooting range closed down and located somewhere else, I doubt that the US Forest Service cares about the issues being experienced by this Vietnam era veteran. I do believe that if a management plan was put in place to oversee the range, making it a safer, controlled environment it would give me some peace, and that it would do the same for many other citizens in this area.

If the US Forest Service can charge Manitou Lake to control and manage the area, I believe the same thing should be done for this shooting range. If families are charged to enjoy the lake area, it only makes sense to charge the gun enthusiasts to utilize the land for their activities. I understand that the Forest Service has limited manpower and resources, but the popularity of this site compels me to believe that an outside organization could be selected to establish the "business" and manage it going forward with a percentage of the fees or profits being paid annually/monthly to the US Forest Service.

With this innovative, commercial, outsourcing plan, many risks to the forest and the private property in the area would be eliminated or severely diminished. Private property in this area brings in tax assessments of approximately nine million dollars per year to Douglas County which is at constantly at risk due to the fire issues that have been documented in the last 10+ years because of this open space. With daily on-site management, hours of operation could be set and the facility could be gated and closed at night which would eliminate the noise pollution at night and probably reduce the noise pollution during the day. With this same on-site management, individuals that are not legal gun owners could be identified and fined with the ability for illegal firearms to be confiscated. With on-site management, fires from exploding targets would be eliminated, and when a fire is accidentally started there would be someone there to identify the issue and immediately reach out for support and assistance to control the situation quickly minimizing damage and property loss. When injuries occur or someone is shot, again there would be someone there to bring in emergency teams and law enforcement as required. Issues that have been experienced with the tons of trash, garbage, junk furniture-appliances and even junk cars that were deposited and left here would not occur going forward. Future accumulation of shell casings on the land could be minimized with patrols to oversee that individuals are removing their targets, spent casings and shotgun shells per the guidelines issued by the Pikes Peak Ranger District. With supervised removal (or site collection for recycling or to be sold) of the spent shells and casings, lead leaching into the soil and water in the

area could be eliminated entirely or at least extremely minimized. The supervision would also eliminate individuals shooting at the highway signs and trees per those same guidelines.

It's time for the US Forest Service to take charge of this situation and recognize the rights of individuals who live in this area, especially those who were here long before this range was established. It's time for the USFS to take charge and correct the issues this establishment has created and minimize the risk to the land, human life and the wildlife. It is time for the waste related to current costs and care of this area of the forest to be realistically reviewed and for a plan to be put in place that will eliminate the problems and define the area as a safe and managed forest attraction.