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Organization: Colorado Four Wheel Drive Association

Title: Land Use Chairman

Comments: I will start of by saying that in addition to my position as Land Use Chairman for the CO4WDA, I am the past President. I am also a member of the Colorado Off Road Enterprise (CORE) and also serve on the Advisory Board, Past Chairman and currently a board member of the Colorado Off Highway Vehicle Coalition (COHVCO), a member and volunteer with Stay the Trail and Tread Lightly and a member of the Colorado Springs Christian Four Wheelers. I have been driving my Jeeps on Old Stage and Gold Camp Roads since my arrival to El Paso County over 20 years ago and I and the organizations I represent are greatly disturbed by the growing disregard that recreational or target shooters have displayed in that area. Twenty years ago, the two major shooting areas in the area were up on FRS381 and FSR379 and not directly off Gold Camp Road. Now, almost any place you can pull off the road, people have set up shooting areas. Every year, members of my club, Colorado Springs Christian Four Wheelers team up with other area four-wheel drive clubs, the Forest Service, Stay the Trail and on several occasions, Focus on the Forest to conduct a clean-up along Gold Camp Road and haul hundreds of pounds of trash, most of it from shooting areas, and find new places that have been created resulting in damage to hundreds of trees. I also feel that many of these user created sites are not safe. I should add that I am a retired US Army Command Sergeant Major with over 36 years of service, so I know a little bit about weapons and ballistics. Many of these user created shooting areas don't take into account a proper back stop or ricochets. One specific area that comes to mind is the cut-off or short cut which is called Upper Beaver Creek Road on Google Maps or Forest Service Road 370.1. When shooters are aiming in a southerly direction, there is less than 1/2 a mile to the Gold Camp Road FSR370. I understand that in recent years, recreational shooters have lost the range above Garden of the Gods along the Rampart Range Road and west of Monument along Mount Hermon Road which has put more pressure on this area, but for both the destruction of our natural resources and for the safety of other users groups, shooting along Gold Camp Road should be restricted to 2 or 3 areas that are safe and can be properly managed. The two areas I would recommend are off FSR379 and 381 as I stated at the beginning of my comments, two areas that have been historically used. If the Forest Service plans to reopen the campground near the bottom of 381 then that location would not be suitable, but presently that campground has been closed for several years. Lastly, when I first came to this area and family came to visit, a nice afternoon drive to show them the forest and the mountains was Old Stage to Gold Camp out to Cripple Creek, now Gold Camp Road looks like a war zone and I avoid the area unless I am involved in a clean-up, vehicle recovery or other trail project.