

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/28/2023 10:09:16 PM

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Comments: I write in opposition to the proposed closing of dispersed shooting in the Pike National Forest.

I camp and shoot in the Forest on a regular basis and I, too, am distressed by the amount of trash I see on the trails. When I camp, I leave the site cleaner than when I arrived. People like me are not the culprits, yet we are being punished for the bad behavior of others.

The people who leave their trash are already breaking the rules - will creating another rule really change their behavior? It is the conscientious forest users who will comply with this rule, and we are not the problem. Perhaps there could be an incentive program to pick up trash that isn't yours when utilizing the forest. It could be as simple as an honor system website where you could enter the approximate weight of trash you packed out, and receive a window sticker in appreciation for your efforts.

Another argument against the proposal is that shooting anywhere close to populated areas like Colorado Springs requires a shooter to pay admission to a public range or pay to join a private range. The national forest allows someone to drive a small distance away and shoot for free. Creating free public shooting ranges will still allow for free shooting, but will create a barrier of needing to go to a specific location with no guarantee of an open lane. In the forest, if someone is in the place you normally go, you can just move down the trail a safe distance to another area with a safe backstop.

I agree that safety is a concern with dispersed shooting, however I believe the regions proposed for closing are unnecessarily large. Nearly everyone who shoots does so safely. Closing the forest due to a small number of (grantedly tragic) incidents is like a teacher saying the whole class has to stay in for recess because one student won't stay in his chair.

I would prefer to see the efforts and resources go into education and supporting good behavior rather than restricting lawful and safe forest use by the vast majority.