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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

To: USFS District Ranger, Norwood, CO

It has come to my attention that the Telluride Mountain Club is proposing two options for the construction of a new multi-use trail, the Sheep Mountain Traverse. This current proposal is misguided.

The proposed starting point and parking area is near the restored Trout Lake trestle which is accessed through the Trout Lake P.U.D.. The Trout Lake community has already seen a dramatic increase in vehicular traffic through its community, primarily due to the explosion of Trout Lake recreational usage and proximity to the Lake Hope trailhead in the summer as well as the popularity of the groomed Nordic ski track and helicopter skiing during the winter. In addition, the proposed parking area has limited space and no restroom facility in the summer.

Additionally, there ALREADY exists a multi-use trail from the top of Lizard Head pass: the Galloping Goose Trail. Why would anyone choose to spend in excess of \$120,000.00 (TMC's published estimate at \$40,000 per mile) to construct a multi-use trail which parallels an existing multi-use trail?

If the Telluride Mountain Club feels that there is such an overwhelming demand for such a trail, perhaps they could consider a few of the possibilities below.

1. Develop a loop trail at the base of Sheep Mountain meadow/timber interface that would begin at the top of Lizard Head pass and terminate at the EAST FORK trailhead parking area. This would involve coordination with the San Juan National Forest. Ample parking is available as well as restroom facilities and trash collection at the top of the pass.

- 2 The solution above would then link with the multiuse EAST FORK trail, the CROSS MOUNTAIN trail (up to the Lizard Head Wilderness sign), the existing GROUND HOG trail, and the old highway two track path back to the Lizard Head parking area. Diversity of terrain and trail connectivity are greatly enhanced.

- 3.Utilize the existing GALLOPING GOOSE Trail (north and south directions) by seeking a parking agreement with the USFS Matterhorn facility to use its winter, cross country skiing parking area. Install and service a Port-a-Potty.

These options would help mitigate vehicle traffic through the Trout Lake P.U.D. and offer even more trail variety.

Finally, I find it disturbing (again) that the Telluride Mountain Club has failed to reach out to adjacent property owners, namely the Trout Lake Owners Association, Trout Lake Land Company, and the Lizard Head Land Company, who will be the most impacted by the SHEEP MOUNTAIN TRAVERSE proposal. Moreover, similar to the SHEEP MOUNTAIN TRAVERSE proposal, there was no outreach by the TMtC to adjacent and most affected land owners regarding the TMtC's proposed HIDDEN LAKES trail. To my knowledge, none of the affected shareholders (property owners) have received official notification that the HIDDEN LAKES trail has been decommissioned nor listed as unauthorized. Notification on the TMtC's website would help alleviate this issue. A bit of transparency would be appreciated.

Thank you, in advance, for considering my comments.

Regards,
Jim Whitehead
TLLC President