Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/16/2024 2:11:28 PM First name: Eduardo Last name: Prado Organization:

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Comments: As a mountain biker and property owner in the Trout Lake/Hope Lake basin, I am familiar with the impact that recreation has had in this delicate high-altitude ecosystem. In the last five years there has already been an explosion of recreational activities along Hope Lake road. The combination of hikers and campers have taxed the roads, sanitation facilities, camping areas and hiking trails to the point that campfires and parking are being done in areas along the roadway that have left visible tracks, tire paths, left over fire sites, human waste, toilet paper, and garbage and debris. Because of the lack of road maintenance, some of the property owners take it upon ourselves to open the road after the snow melts by clearing the fallen trees that impede access every year. Every year we discover and clean more and more garbage. Additionally, we have contended with trespassing by cyclists attempting to access high altitude areas that lies beyond the Hidden Lake subdivision. This has gotten so out of control that legal action was required and local law enforcement has had to be engaged to address it. This use is already taxing the natural resources, and creating additional designated trails will only invite more recreants to an area that is intended to be designated as a wildlife management area. The concentration of cyclists that comes with formally designated, numbered and cleared and maintained bike trails not only damages the natural vegetation, but also is inconsistent with the attempt to maintain the management area in its natural state. This use is inconsistent and detracts from the appeal of the area as a wildlife area to those of us who appreciate it and enjoy it in that form. Surely there is room for everything and everyone in the San Juan Mountains. But there is no need to turn all of our wilderness areas into biking parks. With the recent additions to bike areas in Telluride and Silverton, we need more, not less natural areas that can be enjoyed in their natural state, including by those of us who enjoy biking these natural areas in their primitive state. If we don't preserve these areas, we risk losing the essence of these areas - which is what make them so special to recreants to begin with.