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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to express my full-throated support for the Telluride Mountain Club (TMtC) Trail Proposal 2023 #65616. I have been a full-time resident of San Miguel County, CO for 23 years and recreate on local trails to hike, access local mountains, hunt, ride my dirtbike, and ride my horse. Our local trails are a treasure and the TMtC proposal will benefit outdoor enthusiasts in a number of meaningful ways.

The proposal includes trails for a wide range of user groups, and also for users of all abilities. While the Telluride Ski Resort requires users to pay to ride their trails, the TMtC proposal will increase options for free outdoor experiences. Free access to the outdoors removes a barrier that can increase equity to our amazing outdoor spaces for under-represented user groups.

Connector trails will help build a continuity of experiences by allowing users to remain on trails to connect pre-existing systems of trails. They will also help keep users off our narrow, mountain roads, which will enhance user safety.

Expanding Telluride's trail system will alleviate congestion and distribute trail users more evenly, addressing the escalating popularity of outdoor recreation. To paraphrase former Norwood District Ranger Matt Zumstein, "More and more people will come to our forest and it's important that we are ready when they do."

I am a local business owner operating in the outdoor recreation space. There is a direct economic benefit to improving our systems of local trails. The Telluride region's trails are a draw for visitors, who drive our local economy. As our region sees increased visitations, this sort of proactive planning will not only help accommodate that growth, but it will also help keep Telluride's trail infrastructure sustainable in the future.

Locals too, will benefit from the TMtC proposal, as some of the connector trails will enhance opportunities for human-powered commuting, fostering healthy life choices and decreasing our reliance on fossil fuels.

I urge you to please allow the TMtC proposal to move forward!