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Organization:

Title:

Comments: As an Eagle Vail Homeowner on the West Side of Deer Blvd for 20 years, I object to this trail expansion for numerous reasons.

Wildlife - First and foremost is the impact this trail will have on the wildlife in the area. I have personally observed on numerous occasions Elk, Deer, Bear, Bobcat, Fox, Moose as well as Hawks, Eagles, and many other furry and feathered forest wildlife in their natural habitat on this hillside and into my back yard. Mountain lions have also been observed in this proposed expansion area. The number of users a trail like this would bring across this hillside would be extremely detrimental to this wildlife. There used to be a number of elk that would bed on this hillside in the winter however that number has steadily declined over the years and no doubt would all but vanish with the number of users this would expose them to. In addition, these so called spiderwebs of "social trails" are primarily game trails that the above-mentioned wildlife created over time and use to navigate this very steep hillside.

Topography - The topography of the area is extremely steep with exposed rocky cliffs directly above comprised primarily of soft gypsum. Each year in the spring as temperatures start to fluctuate and the snow begins to melt, we have a number of bowling ball and larger sized boulders that crash into our property. This is a natural process I can live with however with an influx of users I am concerned that these occurrences will become more frequent and potentially more dangerous to myself, family, property and neighbors. I have also observed natural avalanches in the winter and wet avalanches in the spring that have carried debris onto our property, which again are natural, but worry that human triggered slides could pose further danger.

Fire Danger - Fire danger is another concern. Drought conditions mixed with human interactions and steep topography creates a fire danger to property and lives. There is no easy or safe access to fight a potential wildfire in this area posing increased danger to firefighters and property.

Impacts to Private Property - The original Eagle Vail trail as it currently stands, borders golf course property, with the exception of the short section that goes above Elk Lane, approximately 13 private parcels. The trail at these parcels is set back further than the setback of the proposed extension as the topography of the Elk Lane portion has a natural bench that provides a buffer from the trail and the private parcels. The proposed expansion borders 48 +/- private parcels on Deer Blvd alone, not including the River Oaks condos. There is no natural barrier above these parcels. The extreme slope above these parcels will require the trail to be low and close to the property lines which will directly affect privacy. The steep hillside also acts as a natural amphitheater and normal level conversation carries and can be heard by these property owners. I also am concerned with people wanting to take "shortcuts" to get down to Deer Blvd as there is no proper access except at the start and end.

Pedestrian Safety - Another point that many people have made in favor of this trail expansion is the dangers of pedestrians traveling on highway 6. Several years ago, a full pedestrian path was installed on highway 6 in this area which is very well maintained including plowed of snow in the winter. Unfortunately, many bikers do not utilize the path but are quick to bring up pedestrian safety as an argument for this trail expansion.

Overall, I am disappointed with the lack of communication to myself and these other 48 +/- property owners who will be most affected by this trail expansion. Unfortunately, we find this out with only a small window to study, process, comment and react. I imagine that there are some of these property owners who are still unaware of this proposal. In the meantime, social media blasts have solicited support from hundreds of people, many of whom live nowhere near, are not at all familiar with the specifics of the area in question or any idea of the negative impacts. They simply see it as "more trails".

I am not against trails, but I do feel there has been a lack of transparency with this process. I am concerned that

there is a hidden agenda behind this stemming from the Front Gate Development and several others which I will refrain from naming, none of which have Eagle-Vail homeowners or the National Forest in their best interest.

I feel very grateful that in order for this project to happen, a very small portion of this proposed trail must cross Forest Service land and per the National Environmental Policy Act NEPA of 1970, leaves this important decision in the hands of the National Forest Service Ranger, who is appointed to not only be responsible for protecting the forest land and wildlife but also representing the public which includes property owners. If it was not for this small section of forest service land, this trail expansion would have happened already without any opportunity to comment or object and thus successfully meeting these hidden agendas and acting as a great detriment to the public lands.

Please do not let this trail expansion happen.