

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/29/2024 9:03:25 PM

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Comments: The Forest Service should select Alternative 2, Proposed Action. Alternative 2 provides for maximum safety for forest visitors and private landowners, while continuing to allow for opportunities for managed recreational target shooting on NFS lands.

As the population of the Colorado Front Range continues to increase rapidly, more and more people are visiting the Pike National Forest for recreation and other uses. More and more private land adjacent and near to National Forest System (NFS) is being developed by landowners. The Forest Service must consider public safety and must actively manage recreation on NFS lands.

Forest recreators and private landowners deserve a safe forest environment. There have been many reports of recreators in campsites and on trails and roads that have had close calls with errant bullets passing nearby. Private landowners have also experienced unsafe shooting near their property and their safety is at risk.

Many existing and new recreational shooters (city dwellers) have not been brought up hunting and learning how to use and respect firearms. There are no required weapon safety classes when shooters purchase firearms. Many shooters do not take the time to learn about safe shooting and to learn forest regulations. It is common to see and hear about target shooters shooting on a ridge with no backstop or placing targets on trees with no backstop, oblivious to who or what might be in the distance.

On the Pikes Peak Ranger District, Turkey Tracks is a good option for a managed shooting range for all types of weapons due to the size of the area and easy access on maintained paved state highways. Concerns from nearby private landowners should be solved before a range is constructed.

On the Pikes Peak Ranger District, a shooting range should not be developed on NFSR 370.I. The location is remote and requires an hour's drive from Colorado Springs on a very rough dirt road. The road is only occasionally maintained. In the winter, road maintenance is not reliable and there are sections of the road that can be treacherous due to ice on the road on steep grades. 10 acres is too small to construct an adequately sized shooting range. If the shooting range is fully occupied, shooters are likely to go further up the road to target shoot (illegally). Many shooters own a variety of weapons, pistol and rifle, and want to target shoot with both types of weapons. A small remote pistol-only range is not practical. When the South Rampart Range Road Shooting Range on the Pikes Peak Ranger District was open, if the limited short range or long-range lanes were occupied, shooters frequently moved to the shotgun range and shot rifle bullets down into a valley with no backstop, and with no consideration of where the bullets were going.

The target shooting closure for NFS lands in El Paso County on Old Stage and Gold Camp Roads that was in effect for over 30 years was frequently ignored by target shooters, which often put private landowners and recreators in danger from illegal shooting. Also, there has been a great deal of resource and property damage from target shooters shooting at signs and other property along the road as they drove up the road. If a shooting range off Gold Camp Road is not approved, there will be no reason for target shooters to drive up the road, which will reduce traffic volume, increase safety for landowners and forest visitors from illegal shooting, and will greatly reduce property and resource damage.