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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to express our collective disappointment regarding the proposed closure of long-established off-road trails within the San Bernardino National Forest as part of the Comprehensive River Management Plan for Deep Creek and Whitewater River. Our enduro club, Broken Enduro, alongside other groups like Big Bear Trail Riders and WLF Enduro, has a long-standing commitment to preserving and responsibly enjoying these public lands. We would like to share our concerns and constructive suggestions to help ensure that public access and environmental preservation go hand in hand.

Community and Stewardship Commitment

For decades, our club members have responsibly used and maintained these trails. We participate in trail cleanups, educate riders on proper off-road etiquette, and collaborate with local organizations, including hosting charity rides for causes like pediatric brain tumor research and ride-alongs for first responders. Closing access would undermine these efforts and limit our ability to continue engaging with and giving back to the community through such events.

Unintended Consequences of Trail Closures

We believe that closing established trails could lead to the creation of unofficial paths by riders attempting to connect popular routes such as Arrowhead to Big Bear. This would risk increased environmental damage, erosion, and impacts on the watershed. Keeping existing trails open, rather than closing them, allows for responsible usage and easier regulation, ultimately protecting sensitive areas better than forcing unauthorized trail use.

Focus on Problematic User Groups

We have observed that many trail-related issues stem from uneducated or reckless use by certain groups, often in larger off-road vehicles like Jeeps, Side by Sides, and ATVs, particularly those rented or operated by visitors unfamiliar with the terrain. We suggest increased educational campaigns, improved signage, and stricter enforcement of existing rules, rather than broadly restricting access to responsible users.

Alternative Solutions to Trail Management

Our club is ready to assist with any necessary maintenance or improvements to existing trails to minimize their environmental impact. We are stewards of these lands and would gladly collaborate with the Forest Service to keep the trails safe, sustainable, and open to responsible users. We also support exploring limited access measures, such as allowing two-wheel-only trails where appropriate, as a balanced approach to management.

Closing these trails would not serve the intended goals of protection and preservation but would instead alienate those who have worked hardest to care for and respect these public lands. We respectfully urge the U.S. Forest Service to reconsider the closure proposal and instead engage with the local riding community to develop sustainable solutions that achieve protection goals without eliminating cherished recreational access.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Broken Enduro and Associated Members