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First name: Dennis

Last name: Basler

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service and Telluride Mountain Club,

As residents of Telluride for the last 8 years, we realize what a gift it is to be in such a relatively unspoiled natural setting. We have not seen a more beautiful valley anywhere in the state.

This box canyon area should really have been a national park, it is that magical.

However, the mining companies were here first, before that park status could be realized.

Below I have listed a few of my concerns regarding adding another trail through this pristine and currently off-limits area.

Environmental Impact: Constructing a new trail would disrupt the delicate ecosystem, harming native plant and animal species.

- * Wildlife Disturbance: Increased human traffic could displace wildlife, interfere with migration patterns, and increase human-wildlife conflicts.

- * Erosion & Habitat Destruction: Trail construction and subsequent use could lead to soil erosion, destabilizing riverbanks and degrading water quality in the San Miguel River.

- * Loss of Pristine Wilderness: The remaining undisturbed areas along the river are increasingly rare; a new trail could permanently alter the natural beauty and solitude they offer.

- * Water Quality Concerns: Increased foot and bike traffic may contribute to pollution, sediment runoff, and potential contamination of the river.

- * Existing Trail Network: Telluride already has an extensive system of trails; improving or maintaining these may be a better option than fragmenting new wilderness.

- * Increased Human Impact: More trails can lead to littering, unauthorized camping, and other human-related disturbances in fragile environments.

And what is to stop hikers from easily wandering up the large tailings pile... to see the view and spend time?

- * Cultural & Historical Preservation: The area has cultural, historical, and indigenous significance that could be impacted by new development.

- * Safety & Rescue Challenges: Additional trails in remote areas may increase the likelihood of accidents, placing more demand on local search-and-rescue resources.

- * Slippery Slope of Development: Building one trail sets a precedent for further development, gradually diminishing the area's untouched character.

Thank you for considering my thoughts on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Dennis Basler