

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/24/2025 11:34:10 PM

First name: Maureen

Last name: Staloch

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear US Forest Service and Telluride Mountain Club,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed South Side Perimeter Hiking Trail (SSPT). While I support expanding outdoor recreation, this proposal threatens our community's character, damages delicate ecosystems, and places unnecessary strain on local infrastructure.

The SSPT would bring increased traffic and congestion to roads unequipped for a surge of visitors. Parking shortages and unsafe conditions for pedestrians, cyclists, and residents are inevitable. The additional noise and vehicle traffic would disrupt the safety and tranquility we cherish.

Furthermore, the trail's proximity to private properties raises concerns about privacy and trespassing. Hikers often stray from designated paths, leading to conflicts with homeowners. Without effective enforcement, these issues will escalate, diminishing our quality of life.

The environmental consequences are equally alarming. The proposed trail would disturb one of the last undisturbed hillsides near Telluride, a refuge for wildlife such as elk, deer, and mountain lions. Increased human presence would disrupt natural habitats, causing erosion, vegetation loss, and waste accumulation.

With over 150 miles of existing trails, including the well-maintained River Trail, this new project is unnecessary. Resources would be better spent maintaining and enhancing our current trail network, ensuring sustainable outdoor access without harming the environment.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider the SSPT proposal in favor of preserving our natural surroundings and supporting responsible trail management.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Maureen Staloch