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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Subject: Opposition to Proposed South Side Perimeter Hiking Trail

To: United States Forest Service and Telluride Mountain Club

Dear US Forest Service and Telluride Mountain Club,

I'm writing to express my opposition to the proposed South Side Perimeter hiking trail. As a full time resident, I am fortunate enough to live near this pristine area that is being considered for the South Side Perimeter trail. While I fully support responsible outdoor recreation and access to nature, this particular proposal raises serious concerns about the environmental impact on local wildlife, as well as our neighborhood's safety, privacy, and overall quality of life.

As many other commenters have mentioned, the environmental impact to this area will be irreversible. Our home sits on the North side of the tall tailings pile, where we witness the varied wildlife visiting the river every day for water, or their tracks in the winter snow. The proposed trail cuts off that access. In addition, the disruption to the annual Elk mating and calving in the area would be significant. We already have a well maintained trail that poses minimal disruption to our sensitive wildlife, how do you justify the significant environmental impact of this proposed trail?

Having this trail start at Town Park, during the large festivals, will be an open invitation to bring more campers into this sensitive area. We already have issues with illegal campers accessing the riverfront from Pandora Lane during festivals, and can only imagine how difficult it would be to manage illegal camping off a trail accessed from town park. Are we planning to hire more county Marshalls to patrol this trail at night, during these times of high use?

The existing trail has minimal impact on local wildlife and vegetation, is well maintained, never overcrowded, and easily accessible, without the need for additional county Marshalls to monitor during peak festival season. Is a redundant trail, the expense to maintain, additional burden on the already strained county Marshalls to patrol during festivals, and the irreversible, significant impact on our sensitive wildlife really necessary?

Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns.

Sincerely,

Donna Basler