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Comments: Thank you for the work on this draft EA. As one of the owners of Trout Lake Land Company and a full-time resident, I oppose the building of the Sheep Mountain Transverse (SMT) trail and strongly urge the USFS to change the EA to recommend and ultimately select Option C/Alternative A and eliminate SMT trail from the proposed action.

There are a number of corrections needed in the draft EA:

*Habitat--I have noticed an increase in the snowshoe hare population in the last couple years and as a result I have seen lynx tracks and a number of neighbors have reported seeing lynx, which I hope happens to me soon! It would be so exciting! So, it seems that the project to restore the lynx population is finally coming to fruition. I feel strongly that we should not do anything to hinder this from happening and the SMT trail would be such a hinderance! In the section on lynx habitat the authors state: "The long, narrow distribution of impacts (along trail alignments) would functionally preserve understory forest structure within the immediate vicinity and would not result in significant breaks in the density of low hanging branches, understory shrubs, and downed woody material throughout a stand." This does not make any logical sense as the whole purpose of creating a trail is to clear the understory and low hanging branches. Thus, the authors' conclusion that creating the trail in lynx habitat would not negatively impact that habitat is suspect at best and, actually, just plain wrong. Of course a trail and all its resulting human-bike-horse traffic through the habitat is going to negatively impact the beings who live in that habitat! This is common sense! Also, the calculation of just the trail, a mere 1.8 acres, as the impact area is ludicrous because people, bikes, and horses will go off trail. Please correct the EA to show that the proposed SMT trail's impact would be larger than just the trail and would push the lynx, snowshoe hares, elk, bear, mountain lions, and other species who live on Sheep Mountain into an ever-shrinking space of suitable habitat. Finally, this is an unnecessary negative impact on wildlife as there is an abundance of trails already available in the area and the Galloping Goose is right there! So please change the draft EA to recommend Option C/Alternative 3-eliminate the proposed SMT trail from the action and preserve the lynx habitat in it's current fully intact state!

*Seasonal Use--There is a comment in the EA that the proposed SMT trail would not be used in winter and, therefore, not impact the lynx and snowshoe hare habitat negatively. This notion is ludicrous for a couple reasons: one, the lynx and hares live here year-round and so will be negatively impacted by spring/summer/fall trail use and, two, the trail is likely to be used by skiers in the winter. Please amend the draft EA to correct this incorrect assessment.

*CORE Act-The boundary for the Sheep Mountain Special Use Area should be the existing Galloping Goose trail/road not this proposed new trail because building and using this proposed trail as the boundary would decrease the size of the Special Use Area not maintain its present size as intended by the CORE Act. Again please correct the draft EA to recommend Option C/Alternative C eliminating the proposed SMT trail from the action.

*Parking and Traffic-this section is woefully incomplete. Whoever did the assessment clearly did not come to Trout Lake in the summer. Please amend the draft EA to reflect the following: Most summer days we are inundated with traffic. Hundreds of cars go up to the Hope Lake Trailhead via North Trout Lake Road. As many go up and down the Galloping Goose, also using North Trout Lake Road. The traffic causes dust, damages the road, and many people speed putting pedestrians at risk. Another trail would increase traffic and any increase in traffic would obviously increase these negative impacts on our health and safety. The parking lot at the boat ramp is full most every day and although parking along most of North Trout Lake Road is technically prohibited there is constant illegal parking along the road making it congested and dangerous. The proposed parking for this proposed trail at the trestle is another problem. That parking is generally full a lot of winter days for the Nordic skiing and often there are cars parked along the road for that as well. Having that parking lot full and overflowing all summer as well as winter is unimaginable and unacceptable. Overall, Trout Lake residents are already dealing with the traffic and parking impacts of a lot of recreation on the USFS lands around us and, therefore, I

am adamantly opposed to doing anything to increase these negative traffic and parking impacts on our community. Please change the EA to recommend Option C/Alternative 3 as it will help prevent increased traffic and parking problems. We are already dealing with enough.

*Camping--The draft EA does not appear to deal with the camping situation around Trout Lake and if this proposed trail were to be built, it would increase this problematic and dangerous situation as well. Please amend the EA to include this topic taking into account the following information. Currently there is unmonitored, dispersed camping along the Galloping Goose and Hope Lake Road. I have seen trespassing, trash, and human waste on our land as a result. And more importantly, there is a huge wildfire danger because of the dangerous, incessant, and improper use of campfires in the dispersed camping sites. I have personally found beds of hot coals left by campers a number of times--this is really scary as it is the number one cause of forest fires!

*Helitrax-I have been awakened many winter days to the house shaking from the bombing and the helicopters go right over the house and nordic trail which seriously disturbs the winter silence.

I, as a Trout Lake resident am already dealing with enough of the impacts of recreation on my neighbor USFS' land. Another trail and all the increase of negative impacts on me and the other species who live here is not acceptable, please amend the Draft EA to reflect this by recommending Option C/Alternative 3 and eliminate SLT trail from the action. Thank you for listening to your neighbor.

Lastly, I have been speaking to the specific concerns of Trout Lake, but I hope the USFS recognizes that this proposed action is wide-spread over this area and, therefore, warrants public meetings to have true community input into the proposed project. The Telluride Mountain Club claims community involvement in their proposal based on the survey they conducted, however, they only sent the survey to their members which is a very biased sampling method. There needs to be opportunity for all citizens of the communities which will be impacted to be heard.