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First name: Carolyn

Last name: Smith

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Our family has had a permit with the Timpas Grazing Association since its formation. We've seen some changes on the grassland since then and would like to draw your attention to a few of those changes as well as offer some points to consider. We have seen a huge increase in recreational use on the grassland in the form of hunting, camping, and general day use. Our roads are taking a beating from all this use, the public doesn't understand if it's wet or muddy they should stay off the roads. Instead they make new roads to avoid the mud. Some roads have become so deep your pickup bottoms out. We are told we can't do any road maintenance yet the FS isn't doing any maintenance either, meanwhile the road becomes impassable and a new one is created next to the old which is not good for the resource. We need the ability to perform road maintenance where applicable. We also see problems with the public recreating and leaving gates open, livestock end up out of rotation or on roadways. Forest Service needs to educate the public on shared use and how to respectfully recreate on land that has multiple uses. Since COVID we have seen more and more people camping out on the landscape. At times they are on FS land but other times they have set up camp on private property which is intermingled with FS land, we kindly ask them to leave and direct them to public lands. This is an issue along with many others when private and federal lands are intermingled. Proper signage and law enforcement would help this issue. To my knowledge there is only one law enforcement officer for all of the Pike, San Isabel, Comanche and Cimarron, this is not enough law enforcement presence to accomplish anything. You must take this into consideration when you yourselves have recognized the increased use across the grasslands.

In closing I would just like to remind you that most of your permittees have been successfully ranching in southeast Colorado for generations. We would not still be here operating if we weren't managing the land in a sustainable way. For many of us our FS permits are an integral part to our operations and we take care of the land as if it was our own. We maintain the infrastructure, install improvements (when allowed) and adjust stocking rates to align with annual forage production. We work diligently to keep and create something we can be proud to pass on to the next generation.

Thank you for your time.

Carolyn Smith