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Comments:

To the US Forest Service regarding the Proposed Action for the Rico-West area:

As an avid motorcyclist and outdoorsman I am very disturbed by some of the consequences of the recent Proposed Action plan, especially as it relates to motorcycle recreation. I have ridden motorcycles in the Rico area for many years and also have been a big game hunter in other parts of the state.

After reading the action plan the first problem I see is the "seasonal closure" that would ban motorcycles from Single Track trails for the majority of the year. Where is the equality in shutting down and excluding an entire user group from our public lands just to satisfy the needs of another group of users? There is no reasonable purpose to even consider this aspect of the action plan. Being both a motorcyclist and hunter I have never experienced a conflict when I am doing one or the other activity. This is a ploy by a very small group of people to convert public lands into their own "private" land by removing all other users.

In addition to this clear inequality, it is often local motorcyclists and motorcycle clubs that clear these trails each spring and if not allowed to even be on them until July, it would severely shorten our riding season beyond the "seasonal closure". Also if motorized vehicles are the problem for hunters why is there no mention of banning other motorized vehicles on all other road ways/trails in the area?

In regards to the closure of trails, I would encourage you to realize that simply closing trails will not decrease the amount of traffic the area sees and in turn results in unsafe conditions. These unsafe conditions are a result of much more traffic in a much smaller "legal" area to ride. This makes it unsafe for me as a motorcycle rider and also all other groups that use these trails due to more traffic.

Not only will this create usage problems, removing trails such as Bear Creek, Burnett and Horse Creek trails will take away options for riders to exit the forest to Hwy 145 or the Town of Rico in case of emergency such as weather, injury or bike problems. Removing these trails makes this area much more unsafe and difficult to access/extricate, there is no reason the Forest Service should be considering removing these trails.

Not only will these closures pose access and safety issues, taking away traffic from the Town of Rico will have a direct impact on the economy of the area. I often stop for lunch at the Enterprise Saloon in Rico and if Burnett and Horse Creek were closed there would be no reason for riders and users of this trail system to stop in Rico. As a small town that depends on every last dollar I am sure the business owners would hate to see tourism decrease.

Closures of mass inventories of trails from motorcyclists will also have a negative impact on the quality of the trails. Every spring it is by and large motorcycle riders that clear deadfall from trails. Taking this user group away will also take the yearly maintenance away and these duties will now fall to the forest service.

I am in support of the rerouting of the Grindstone Trail, and also feel the proposed actions for Spring Creek and Morrison Trails will benefit all user groups.

It is important that our lands are managed and shared for all, however in most of this action I do not see the scales of equality giving all users an equal opportunity to use this area. The seasonal closure is clearly one-sided and unnecessary. Most of the proposed closures will create unsafe conditions and have a negative impact on the local economy. Please consider ALL user groups equally as this Proposed Action is considered.