

Date submitted (UTC): 1/31/2015 3:38:36 AM

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RWD TMP

Greetings,

My name is Todd Herman. I am a 20+ year resident of the Telluride area, and avid backcountry user. I have spent all of those 20+ years ski touring, mountain biking and dirtbiking the region. Since 2006 I have devoted most of my summertime freetime to dirtbiking in and around the Calico trail system. A good portion of this time entailed clearing downed trees on the entire trail system and I would estimate that I have put in around 25-30 hours every year riding with a chainsaw on my back to ensure the trails are passable and don't incur damage from those who would ride around trees and braid the trails. Typically, by the time we are done clearing it is the 2nd or 3rd week of July. With the proposed TMP we would be looking at best 4-5 weeks to enjoy the trails in our backyard. This is a tough pill to swallow given that late summer and the fall are absolutely spectacular on the Calico.

As a non-motorized user I have had encounters with snowmobiles, dirtbikes, horses, and hikers. As a motorized user I have had encounters with the same as well as mountain bikes. In all of my time using these trails on a dirtbike, I have had one negative encounter and that occurred last November on Burnett Creek. 99% of the time everyone is having a great time and enjoying the beautiful area we live in. The negative interaction was with a hunter who claimed we were ruining his hunt. This is odd in that we passed him on our way up going very slowly, then encountered him on our way back some 4-5 hours later and he had shot an animal. I was in front and stalled my bike some 150 feet above him to allow him to get to a suitable section of trail so he could stand to the side and let us pass. Upon passing while coasting my bike, he became indignant about our presence and went on how we were destroying the trails and his hunting experience. This seems somewhat hypocritical as he drove his truck all the way to the start of the trail on what could be considered an extremely deteriorated road then had the good fortune to shoot an animal.

I'm not sure why the people who have issues with motorized use continue to come to the one trail system we have and then raise issue with it. There are seemingly hundreds of thousands of acres and trails that can be hunted without the possibility of seeing motorized users. Why would we not direct those people to these areas or at least provide them with knowledge of use areas so they can make educated decisions. I have had numerous encounters where people run towards us claiming we are riding illegal trails when in fact we are being highly responsible and respectful users. I would consider myself a shepherd of these trails and am very quick to chastise those who are not respectful.

The bottom line is, we can all get along out there. I have seen it, horseback riders thanking us for clearing the trails, people wanting to watch us ride certain sections of trail amazed in what we are doing. Intolerance and exclusion are definitely not the answer to the problem, if there is one. I can count the number of times I have seen people on Sockrider in the last 8 years, Zero. If we really want to do something meaningful, we should be educating people on responsible use. Like don't leave your gutted elk carcass in the middle of the trail with a bunch of beer cans around it, saw it on Priest Gulch and the ridge of Calico minus the beer cans. The goal should be to get everyone on the same page as far as trail etiquette and user protocol. There are always going to be bad users from all groups, let's try to change that first.

As a resident and avid user(I would have a hard time believing that anyone outside our riding group of 3-5 people has been on those trails more than me) that the right course is taken here. Please consider all the facts and the historic nature of the system before making any decisions.

Thanks for your time,  
Todd Herman