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Rico West Dolores Roads and Trails #44918

COMMENTS IN THE 'FORM LETTER' BELOW SHOULD BE A NO-BRAINER. WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BE TOLD HOW IMPORTANT THE NATURAL WORLD IS TO ALL OF US? SPEND YOUR LIFE IN HIGH POPULATION AREAS , AS I DID, WHERE YOU NEVER FIND A QUIET PLACE EVEN AT 10,000 FEET BUT YOU YEARN FOR SPACE WHERE YOU CAN FEEL THAT YOU REALLY ARE PART OF LIFE..... THEN IN YOUR OLDER YEARS FIND SOUTHWEST COLORADO, MAKE IT YOUR HOME, AND CALL IT PARADISE. PEOPLE OUT IN THE FOREST ON LOUD, DANGEROUS, DESTRUCTIVE VEHICLES ARE OUT THERE EXPRESSING THEIR ANGER. IF I HAD A MAGIC WAND I WOULD MAKE EVERY PERSON OUT THERE ON AN ATV OR DIRT BIKE CRASH INTO A TREE - THE VEHICLE IS DESTROYED, BUT EACH ONE OF THOSE PERSONS IS ALIVE BUT INJURED ENOUGH THEY HAVE TO SIT NEXT TO THAT TREE ALL DAY LONG, ALONE. SEE THE FOREST, FEEL THE FOREST, LIVE IN THE FOREST. WAKE UP.

I am writing to urge the San Juan National Forest to protect the Rico/West Dolores (RWD) area from excessive motorized trail use by selecting Alternative E in their Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). It is imperative we safeguard the 245,000 acres of the Dolores River watershed for wildlife habitat, watershed health and quiet-use recreation activities including hiking, biking, horseback riding, fishing, foraging, hunting and more.

The majority of trails in the area should be designated for quiet use only. Non-motorized users have been increasingly displaced from the single-track trails in the RWD area by motorized dirt bikers - it's accurate to note that user conflicts exist! Motorcycles are inappropriate on our public use trails in backcountry roadless areas with alpine tundra, wetlands, meadows, streams and other pristine features. While dirtbikers are a small percentage of trail users, their negative impacts are disproportionately greater including the displacement of quiet trail users, harm to wildlife habitat, the elimination of potential for wildlife viewing, trail erosion, and the fouling of streams and wetlands. Motorized users have access to plenty of trails elsewhere in the Dolores District and quiet users deserve an area reserved primarily for their use.

Motorized use should be open from July 1 to September 8 at a maximum to protect elk and deer in the early summer. Secure and ample wildlife habitat is imperative for an array of species in the area and also important to me as a forest visitor with an interest in wildlife viewing, sightseeing, hunting and quietly enjoying our forested public lands. Volumes of research indicate that motorized use of trails is harmful to wildlife habitat and inhibits wildlife viewing as well as hunting experiences. Hunters are the largest user group in the RWD area and they deserve a quiet hunt annually from September 9 onward. As well, elk and deer would welcome a quiet spring season for rearing their young.

Please implement Alternative E, as it is the only option for protecting quiet users and wildlife from the noise, smell and hazards of motorized trail traffic.

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