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Comments:

To the Dolores District of the U.S. Forest Service:

I previously provided comment on the Rico-West Dolores Travel Management Plan, but neglected to address one specific area, Bear Creek.

Bear Creek is heavily used by non-motorized recreationists, partly because of its unique position in the landscape, starting at relatively low elevation and rising gradually to the La Plata Mountains in the east. A number of outdoor outfitters use Bear Creek for non-motorized trips, including summer outdoor adventures and fall hunting. It is also a destination for trout fishermen, a contemplative activity that is best enjoyed without motorized noise.

In addition to those uses, some of the trails that are currently open to motorized use (e.g., Little Bear Creek) are very difficult to traverse, even by skilled riders, and are also susceptible to unacceptable erosion. Keeping such areas open to motorized use provides little public benefit.

Due to its topographic character, the sounds of motorized equipment, particularly motorcycles are reflected and amplified. A single rider in the canyon can impact quite users more than in many areas. Given that Bear Creek is a part of the Hermosa Roadless Area, the largest in the state of Colorado, and adjacent to the Hermosa Creek Wilderness, designation as a non-motorized use area would be a wise choice, and would enhance the experience of quiet users.

I urge you to make the Bear Creek drainage a non-motorized area to enhance the many uses of the drainage, and increase its attraction to quiet users.

Sincerely,

Gary T. Skiba