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RE: Travel Management - Rico / West Dolores Roads and Trails Project #44918

To: Debbie Kill, Derek Padilla and all other SJNF personnel involved in this decision

As a resident of Rico for the past 44 years, I have been witness to the slow, but inevitable degradation of both the trail system and the quiet solitude of the surrounding high alpine environment. In the first few decades of residing here, many of the current trails were only slight and intermittent footpaths. Their use was light and only rarely would another person be seen or heard. Over the years, as the area has become both more populated and popular the trails are, of course, more heavily used and "entrenched". Rare now, is the day that another person is NOT seen or heard on the trails.

Though use of our public lands is and should be for everyone, not every form of use is always appropriate for every trail. Many of the trails within this travel management area have become unusable to hiking. The condition of these trails from motorized use have become rutted to the extent that they are uncomfortable to hike on. They become unnatural drainages during spring and rainy periods. I do appreciate that some trail riders put forth effort to maintain the condition of the trails, but they are only a few and even when combined with the efforts of forest service trail crews are unable to keep up with the maintenance. Maintenance feasibility is a point of concern within this DEIS.

Solitude in the high country is desirable but, of course, everyone has their right to be there. However, equally important, is a quiet experience. Some of the area trails afford an opportunity to escape highway and road noise, but then have to hear the noise of motorbikes several miles and closer away while on these trails. Finally, though I as a hiker I supposedly have the right of way to a motorbike, that right is impractical and unsafe.

My preference of an alternative here is not offered among those presented. Having to choose among the offerings, I opt for Alt. E, with the omission of the Burnett Creek Trail as motorized and no creation of a new motorized route along the river from Montelores Bridge to access Burnett. Also, the closure periods of Alt. B are preferred. As other commenters have stated, Rico designated a 3 mile radius "quiet zone" and that desire by a majority of Rico residents should be honored. We have repeatedly in these forums let our desires not to become a dirt bike mecca be known.

Thank you for your consideration,
Ron Evers