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

To Whom it May Concern:

As an avid hiker who has lived in Rico for 28 years I am appalled to learn that the Forest Service is considering allowing more motorized use in and around the Rico area. Over the years of hiking the Calico, Horse Gulch and Burnett Trails I have seen first hand the degradations of not only the physical trails from motorized use but the priceless quality of silence compromised. We think twice now before hiking up to the Calico Trail in dread of the noisy bikes we often encounter. Bike noise can be heard for miles. My footsteps can scarcely be heard beyond a few yards. Peace and tranquility become more and more rare and should be protected.

Furthermore, it seems with the lack of enforcement funds, keeping the bikers off the sensitive high alpine areas is impossible. For example there is a sign that prohibits trail bikers from riding on the trail that goes to the summit of Sockrider. What a joke! I have myself witnessed riders there, not to mention having never hiked up without seeing their tracks.

Rico is a unique town that has always placed an emphasis on peace and quiet. Indeed it is one of the towns most endearing qualities. This is evidenced in the Town's Master Plan, the decision to not allow renting of motorized off road vehicles on Main Street and the designated quiet use 3 mile zone. I do not have children, but I have always loved watching the children of Rico hiking and riding their bikes in the hills around town. Visitors kids are generally the only kids I see dressed in those ridiculous outfits on motorized bikes and/or four wheelers. Now I ask you in a country where 40% of the women and 35% of the men are obese whose kids are more likely to grow up and fall into those horrendous statistics? Shame on anyone for not championing physical fitness.

Personally, I would love to see the whole area closed to trail bikers and let those bikers have there own noisy area. However, that does not seem to be an alternative.

In consideration of the foregoing the only alternative that I can support is a combination of alternative E with the addition of non motorized use of the Burnett and Railroad Grade trails plus the seasonal closures proposed in alternative B.

Please make the decision that protects our rights for quiet enjoyment, protects the wildlife, helps our nation be healthy and allows Rico not to be a staging ground for noisy vehicles that are not aligned with Rico's culture.

Thank you.

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