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Rico West Dolores Comment

Hello Dolores Ranger District,

I'm writing today to share my comments on the proposed alternatives for the Rico West Dolores management area as it pertains to motorized use.

First a bit about myself. I enjoy all kinds of activities on OUR public lands, hiking, mtn biking, climbing, camping, exploring and motorcycling. By far my biggest passion is trail riding on my quiet motorcycle. I've been riding motorcycles my entire life but the passion part came after the first day someone showed me the trails in the Rico area, about ten years ago. Since then I have been riding these trails at least once a week, whether to help clear them of deadfall or just to be out enjoying my share of our public lands. It has become very apparent to me over the last decade that motocyclists are the majority user of these trails. I could count one one hand how many mtn bikers I've seen on these trails since I began riding them. I can count on two hands the number of hikers I've seen on these trails in the last five years. I've never seen anyone on horseback other than the Forest Service Trail crew on Johnny Bull several years ago. I'm of firm believe that quite a few of these trails like Rough Canyon, Little Bear, Ryman, and Stoner Creek would not even exist if it weren't for motorcycle traffic and volunteer work. Based on the declarations made by Dolores Ranger District employees Ivan Messinger, Penny k Wu, and Chris Boughton during the ridiculous lawsuit in 2014 I am of FIRM believe that there is some kind of backroom bargaining going on with private land owners (dunton) Why else would there be such a drastic change in the districts handling of this travel management plan? Its very obvious that something dishonest and shady is happening here. Why is it that during the last comment period where there was overwhelming support, via public comment, to keep these trail just as they are yet the alternatives paint a picture of an overwhelming need to close motorized users out? Why did you not listen to the public? There is zero justification for any of this other than the wishes of a 5 star resort owner, his lawyer and a hunting group. Its truly disgusting that the district is giving into the pressure of these people despite testimony from your own office stating that there is plenty of habitat for elk and elk populations are thriving. The Rico area has the highest hunter success rate in the state. Many of my friends hunt in this area and its rare that they don't fill their tag on their very first day of hunting. Any type of seasonal closure is unacceptable and i feel its just being proposed as a round about way to get motorized use off the trails. The closure of any trail for the benefit of a commercial operation is unacceptable. I cant believe just a few short years ago the district went through this process and made honest and intelligent decisions. The lawsuit that originated from Dunton and BCHA that came shortly after that process was swiftly defeated in court. Why the massive flip flop? I'm very angry about this and I feel the district is NOT listening and is catering to a select few.

Given that, I feel every alternative other than "A" is completely unacceptable. There is no data on user conflicts because there are none. My one bad encounter was with Bob Marion. I came up behind him on East Fall creek. He didn't acknowledge that i was even there and refused to step off the trail after many requests to get by him. Finally it hit me that maybe he was deaf and didn't know i was there so i waited for a flat spot and then proceeded to go around him by going off trail a few feet. This is when he turned and snapped several pictures of me while off trail. This kind of mentality is disgusting. Get a life!

I know this is not a standard comment about the alternatives but i sincerely feel that the plan has already been decided on and that you are just doing what your are legally required to do. After reading the comments from

my friends at New Mexico OHV association, I'm confident that this just hoop jumping at its worst and that you will end up in court? again.

Make it right or move on so we can get folks in there like Penny or Steve Berverlin. We had a great relationship with those folks because they were really about public lands for all.

Signed, thoroughly disgusted by the whole thing,

Tom Mann
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"live if you wanna live!" ~ bob marley