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Comments:

Rico West Dolores Roads and Trails Project

Dear SJNF,

I am writing to request that you consider an alternative that gives much more priority to quiet recreation for the Rico/West Dolores Travel Management Plan.

I was saddened to see that you are proposing Alternative B, which keeps too many trails motorized. For those of us seeking quiet recreation, motorcycles in particular often ruin our recreational experience, since we seek quiet as much as views and wildlife.

I have done probably a dozen day hikes and backpacks in this area over the last 20 years. It has not been as heavily used by motorcycles and ATVs as other areas near Cortez, and offers stunning beauty and wildlife. Quiet Recreation should have a priority in this area of the Forest, because it clearly does not to the south and west of Dolores. In fairness to the vast majority of users and for the sake of wildlife and other resources, many of the trails in this area need to be converted to quiet trails.

We backpacked up East Fork Trail about 15 years ago and did not see a vehicle until we got to the pass. We saw abundant birds and even bears. It was a memorable trip, and the quiet was an important part of that. I was surprised to see on the map that this is a motorcycle trail. I suspect today it is not so quiet or will not be in the future if not changed to a quiet recreation trails, as motorized use is increasing.

Alternative E does the best job of providing opportunities for quiet recreation and protecting wildlife. The seasonal closure to motorcycles is certainly welcome, and the shortest motorcycle season of 7/1 to 9/8 is somewhat helpful, but that is almost a prime season for backpacking, so we need more quiet trails not just seasonal closures.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Deb Paulson
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