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Rico West Dolores

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a trail runner and have been running the trails in the San Juan's since I moved to this area in 1992. I run on all trails, motorized and non-motorized. I am going to tell you what I have seen, first hand.

On NON motorized trails I have seen trail damage on parts of the trails from all users; hikers, horseback riders and mountain bikers. Some trails are so badly damaged that I avoid them altogether. Examples of these trails are Hope Lake trail and Blue Lakes trail. These are NON motorized trails that are so eroded, so braided, and so over-used by NON motorized users, they are just no fun to be on. Other NON motorized trails that I run on have significant sections that are impassable, meaning there is no maintenance being done on the trails thus forcing users to go around obstacles. I have seen this on the trails around Woods Lake, where users (horses, mountain bikers, and hikers) have created some serious erosion issues by having to go around downed trees or super sloppy seeps or creeks crossing the trail. This is trail damage and not by motorized users.

I have run on both motorized and NON motorized trails and honestly the motorized trails are, overall, in pretty good shape and quite frankly in much better shape than many of the non-motorized trails because of the maintenance and trail clearing done by the local dirt biking community. I wish more trails were open to dirt bikes because then those trails would get cleared = less walk around's = less erosion = better user experience.

By my comments, I am not suggesting that horseback riders and mountain bikers shouldn't have access to certain trails. I believe all users should have access to public lands and that it is the responsibility of the Forest Service to provide well maintained trails and education to the public on how to behave in the backcountry to ALL users.

ALL users are capable of bad manners in the backcountry, let's not single out one user group whose impact is minimal and whose contributions to maintaining these trails is significant.

Sincerely,

Jen Mann  
Placerville, CO