



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Pike and San Isabel
National Forests
Cimarron and Comanche
National Grasslands

South Platte Ranger District
19316 Goddard Ranch Court
Morrison, CO 80465
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www.fs.usda.gov/psicc

File Code: 2310

Date: July 19, 2012

Dear Interested Public,

The U.S. Forest Service's South Platte Ranger District is seeking the public's input on proposed changes to travel management and the range of available recreation activities that are part of the High Country Travel and Recreation Management Project. The analysis area for this project includes those National Forest System lands that are part of the South Platte Ranger District and that lie generally north and west of Bailey, CO, including the area around Harris Park, Shawnee, the south side of Guanella Pass, Geneva Creek, Hall Valley, Beaver Creek and the north side of Kenosha Pass. Portions of the Lost Creek and Mount Evans Wildernesses that fall within this area have been excluded from the project.

The High Country Travel and Recreation Management Project has two primary purposes: 1) to modify the travel management system to accommodate a range of current and anticipated uses while providing balance with the protection of natural resources; and 2) to better define and implement a variety of recreation opportunities to accommodate a range of current and anticipated uses while providing balance with the protection of natural resources. The need for the proposed project is driven by the high level of public use in parts of the analysis area, along with decreased resources to address the effects of this use. Specifically, high use in some areas is causing unacceptable resource damage. Extensive camping and vehicle use off authorized routes is leading to damage to vegetation, including fragile subalpine and alpine tundra, wetlands, and fens. Demand for recreation is expected to continue to increase over time because of proximity to the Denver metropolitan area and improved access along the Guanella Pass corridor. At the same time, funding for visitor education, transportation system and recreation site maintenance, and law enforcement is decreasing. Improved management of travel and recreation uses would reduce the potential for lasting and future damage and would prolong the ability of these delicate areas to provide a wide array of recreation opportunities.

This project would be primarily focused on recreation management (especially non-developed recreation), roads, and trails. Implementation would take place over several years, depending on funding and work load. Travel management changes would be based on the draft High Country Travel Analysis, which recommended several changes to the road and trail system. The analysis also recommended several actions be taken with existing illegal roads and trails. In addition, changes have been proposed to road or trail types or road or trail access to correct past errors where actual type or access does not match the legal, documented type or access. Much of the existing transportation system would not be changed.



Changes at developed recreation sites would include expanding campgrounds and improving or changing motorized and non-motorized trailheads and trails. Changes to non-developed recreation would consist of identifying areas closed to camping, designating sites available for camping, and several activities designed to reduce potential damage to resources such as campsite hardening, campsite improvements, and campsite removal and restoration.

Additional information on the proposed changes, including a map of the analysis area, may be found at the Forest's website at www.fs.fed.us/r2/psicc. Questions on the project may also be addressed to Matt Schweich 303-275-5615 or mschweich@fs.fed.us.

Opportunities to Provide Comments

As part of the scoping process for this project, the public can provide comments through mail, phone, fax, or email to:

High Country Analysis Team
South Platte Ranger District
19316 Goddard Ranch Ct.
Morrison, CO 80465
(303) 275-5615 voice
(303) 275-5642 fax
mschweich@fs.fed.us

Comments on this project will be most useful if received no later than October 1, 2012.

Only those individuals who provide comment or otherwise express interest by the close of the comment period may be eligible to appeal the decision pursuant to regulations at 36 CFR Part 215. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection.

Sincerely,


J. R. HICKENBOTTOM
District Ranger