



News Release

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &
Thunder Basin National Grassland
<http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>

Contact: Jack Lewis, (970) 870-2299 or Kent Foster, (970) 870-2142

Public Comments Requested on Rabbit Ears Winter Parking

(STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, Colo.) Jan. 2, 2013 – Recreationists who use the Rabbit Ears Pass area east of Steamboat Springs during the winter months are being asked by Routt National Forest officials to provide written comments about parking along U.S. Highway 40.

Since the mid 1990s, demand for parking facilities to accommodate growing snowmobile use, as well as today's larger trucks and trailers has increased in the area. With increased demand, there is also a need to consider installing sanitation facilities for visitors.

To improve existing parking and staging facilities, Hahns Peak-Bears Ears (HPBE) Ranger District managers are seeking public input on the following potential projects:

1. *Dumont Lake Lot* – Redesign and expand the lot to the north and east; Separate recreation traffic from highway by designating entryways to both the lot and highway; Coordinate the installation of potential turning and/or acceleration lanes with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT).
2. *Muddy Creek Lot* – Increase lot size by two to three times the current size to allow for snow storage, camping and facilities; Remove trees associated with expansion through a small timber sale; Institute potential day-use fees to account for increased snow plowing costs and restroom maintenance; Coordinate potential turning and/or acceleration lanes with the CDOT.
3. *Old Columbine Lot* – Redesign to reduce impacts to adjacent wetlands.
4. *East Summit Lot* – To address safety concerns (i.e. semi-blind corner along a high speed portion of Highway 40), eliminate this parking area and accommodate lost parking in other lots.
5. *Fox Curve Lot* – To separate recreation traffic from highway traffic, expand the parking lot away from the highway where the terrain is conducive.
6. *Restroom Facilities* – Install restroom facilities where use meets Forest Service criteria. The Muddy Creek Lot currently has restroom facilities, but other high use lots such as West Summit and others meeting criteria may also warrant facilities.

In order to assist Forest officials in understanding public support and/or concerns with these potential projects, the public is asked to specifically consider and provide input on the following by February 1, 2013:

- Day-Use Fees may be necessary to implement some of the proposed actions – What improvements would you be willing to pay for?
- Any other ideas or suggestions to help improve current parking and restroom facilities.

Written comments may be submitted to Environmental Coordinator Tony Koch at USDA Forest Service, 925 Weiss Drive, Steamboat Springs, CO 80487. Electronic comments can be sent to: comments-rm-medicine-bow-routt-hahns-peak-bears-ears@fs.fed.us (rtf, pdf and Word formats accepted). In-person comments should be directed to Acting District Ranger Jack Lewis at the HPBE Ranger District in Steamboat Springs.

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