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Comments:

Dear Forest Service,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I served two summers as a wilderness ranger in the Spanish Peaks and am also a mountain biker. I value wilderness and solitude immensely, yet I also highly value being able to use my mountain bike. I support creating backcountry non-motorized use areas instead of wilderness study areas. I think we have an ample supply of wilderness areas, and do not think mountain bikes have significant negative wildlife or resource implications. In fact as a ranger I noticed much more resource degradation from hikers and horse traffic. This happens when hikers hike off trail and horseback users tie up their horses to trees destroying all the vegetation in that area, not to mention the damage to the tree. I also cleaned up many unnecessary fire rings and hauled out much trash from backcountry campsites. Of course I am very pro camping, but I do not buy the argument that mountain biking causes more resource or wildlife disruption. Mountain bikers typically spend the majority of their time on the trail and travel through the landscape more quickly. I particularly am interested in maintaining the mountain biking in the lion head area as that area has world class riding that would be a shame to lose.

I also notice how mountain biking is popular with young children (such as my own), and I think we should encourage ways of getting our youth outside and engaged in nature. Mountain biking is a great way to engage kids in nature while also helping get them exercise to combat the obesity epidemic in our youth.

I am also a fly fishing guide so I also want to voice my support for wild and scenic river designation and maintaining our pristine waters as pristine. I oppose any plan that would jeopardize the quality of our watersheds.

Thank you for reading this.

Lucas Rice