

General talking points on PSI Travel Management Plan, with supporting information and examples

- **Support new, extended and permanent seasonal route closures to protect wildlife and habitat**

Studies have shown that disturbance to wildlife during critical periods in their life cycles (during nesting, birthing, migration and winter time periods) can result in decreased reproductive success and/or increased mortality.

Seasonally closing routes in habitat occupied by wildlife during critical periods in their life cycles can effectively minimize disturbance. Although all human use can negatively affect wildlife, motorized use can result in greater impacts due to increased noise, speed, frequency and range of use.

Although the 1984 Forest Plan contained direction to seasonally close roads to motorized use in identified big game winter range areas, and in elk and deer production areas, the Forest never fully followed through to implement that direction. Changing conditions on private and public land (such as new subdivisions and increased winter recreational use) have resulted in shifts in big game use in the 35 years since the release of the 1984 Forest Plan.

-Support new seasonal closures on routes not previously implemented.

Examples: Support a new seasonal closure on Salida District Road 173, to protect deer and elk winter concentration areas and bighorn sheep winter range.

-Support revisions to existing seasonal closures that extend the closures to protect wintering wildlife during a longer period, during migration, and/or to protect wildlife during birthing seasons in the spring and early summer.

Examples: Although the PSI has not provided enough detailed information to confirm this, extending the closure on route 422 on the Leadville District through the end of June as suggested by the Forest Plan would help protect an elk calving area.

-Support making temporary seasonal closures permanent. This order will expire in November of 2021. Wildlife deserve more permanent, lasting and predictable protection that is not subject to administrative errors, the influence of outside interests, and

Examples: The temporary seasonal closure applied to any of the 110+ routes in the 2016 Forest Order should be made permanent.

- **Support motorized route closures in 3A non-motorized management areas, and the retention of these areas as non-motorized areas**

3A management areas were created in the 1984 Forest Plan to emphasize non-motorized/quiet recreation. Public motorized use is never legally allowed in these areas.

Due to the lack of and mismanagement on the part of the Forest Service, public motorized use has been allowed to exist and expand in some of these areas. It is difficult to educate, control and enforce restrictions. Forest Service action and non-action has prioritized motorized recreation in some of these areas at the expense of quiet recreation. This has led to a misperception that motorized use is permitted in these areas.

In some instances, the Forest Service is considering modifying the Forest Plan to further shrink the limited 3A quiet recreation management areas and expand the already predominant areas that permit motorized recreation.

Enforcing the Forest Plan will reduce conflict, preserve and enhance desired quiet use experiences in these 3A areas. Mismanagement and illegal, unauthorized behavior should not be rewarded

Examples: Closing the last 2 miles of Leadville District Road 389 to public motor vehicle use and retaining/enforcing the 3A management area will enhance the experience of cyclists riding the most difficult and highest part of the Leadville Trail 100 Mountain bike course. Route tread surfaces would be preserved, safety would be enhanced, and the quality of the already thin air at 12,600 feet would be enhanced by the elimination of exhaust and dust. A limited amount of administrative and permitted motorized use would still be allowed.

The closure of South Park District Road 126 to the summit of North Twin Cones Peak near Kenosha Pass should also be supported and the 3A management prescription for that area should be maintained.

Modifying the Forest Plan to eliminate 3A non-motorized land and is a substantive change that quiet recreationists oppose.

- **Support the conversion of public roads to administrative or special use permit roads**

The use of a route generally results in greater negative effects (to wildlife, waterways, natural resources, management requirements, etc.) than the presence of a route.

There are many routes on the Forest whose primary purpose is to provide motorized access to communication towers, private and administrative facilities, etc. The majority of the benefits that were scientifically identified for most Forest roads are administrative benefits such as access grazing, fire/fuel treatments, timber access, permitted access, special use access, etc., as opposed to public use recreation or transportation benefits.

Administrative or permitted use can frequently be better accommodated without providing public motorized use and the resulting risks public use entails.

Converting routes to administrative or special use will help protect wildlife habitat and natural resources, and quiet use experiences.

Quiet non-motorized recreation is generally allowed on administrative or permitted routes closed to public motor vehicle use (although clarification of this is needed).

Example: _____

- **Support conversion of roads to use by highway legal vehicles only**

Many Forest roads are open to all type of motorized vehicles, including unlicensed dirt motorcycles, ATVs, side-by-side UTVs and other OHVs.

Operation of OHVs does not require any licensing or testing. OHVs can be legally driven in Colorado by 10 year olds. OHVs are not designed or safe to operate on improved road surfaces, especially paved roads, and OHV manufactures warn against OHV operation on paved roads. OHV use can result in additional dust, emissions and maintenance as compared to normal licensed car or truck use. OHVs are allowed by Colorado Law to emit ~4 times as much noise as the average licensed car or truck.

Restricting certain routes to highway legal vehicles only will increase safety, reduce conflicts, and result in quieter and cleaner conditions along those routes.

Example: Allowing only highway legal motor vehicles in designated USFS campground will preserve quiet, limit noise and dust, and increase safety in these areas. This is proposed for numerous campgrounds in Alternative D.

- **Oppose new motorized trails accessing the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail**

Increased motorized use on this National Scenic trail will substantially interfere with the nature and purpose of this trail as a high quality primitive hiking and horseback riding route. New motorized trails providing access to the CDNST will create additional new motorized loop opportunities, which will increase noise and conflict on the CDNST. Unauthorized and illegal activity should not be rewarded.

Example: Oppose opening up the administratively closed part of Salida District Route 225 in Fooses Creek to motorcycle use up to the CDNST. A 2010 decision that allowed continued motorized use on this segment of National Scenic Trail was successfully appealed, and the USFS was directed to further evaluate/analyze if motorized use on that trail interferes with hiking and horseback riding use. Opening new motorized trails that access the CDNST should be prohibited until that required evaluation/analysis is complete.

- **Oppose the proposed creation and opening of new motorized routes.**

Motorized use creates noise, dust, pollution and disturbance that negatively affects wildlife, natural resources, vegetation and quiet users. It can spread noxious weeds and result in conflicts.

Examples: Oppose the creation of new trail PA 5 on the South Park District, which will reopen a previously closed route and fragment wildlife habitat.

Oppose the creation of new motorcycle trails PA 43 and 43 on the Pikes Peak District which will expand motorcycle use onto the east side of the Rampart Range Road.

Oppose the creation of new motorcycle trail PA 6 on the Salida District, which will negatively affect grazing, quiet recreation, Little Cochetopa Creek, and reward illegal and unauthorized behavior.

Oppose new motorcycle trails PA 16 and 17 on the Pikes Peak District as they will fragment bighorn sheep winter range and winter concentration areas, fragment a 2600-acre block of undisturbed habitat and compromise habitat for imperiled plants.

- **Support closure of roads in Roadless Areas.**

Motorized use compromises Roadless Area characteristics such as soil, air, water, diverse plant and animal habitat, and unfragmented landscapes. The visual, auditory, and other impacts of motorized use are not limited to the route itself. For example, ATV use on trails has been shown to displace elk 960 yards away from the trails.

Examples: Prohibit public motorized use on Salida District road #348 in the Kreutzer-Princeton Roadless Area. This will help protect waterways and wildlife.

Decommission Pikes Peak District Roads 324.B, 327, 300.A, 300.B and 300.C intruding into the East Rampart Roadless Area and adjacent lands.

- **Support the closure of roads to motorized use in Wilderness Areas**

Motorized use compromises Wilderness qualities such as solitude and primitive recreational opportunities. The visual, auditory and other impacts of motorized use are not limited to the route itself, and can impact areas miles away. For example, the USFS recently stated noise from a highway three miles away compromised wilderness qualities enough so as to disqualify an area for consideration as recommended Wilderness.

Example: Support closing Leadville District Road #381 to motorized use. This dead end route exists in a narrow 400-foot wide corridor within the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness Area. Deep and dangerous stream crossings and a steep and rough road contribute to many hikers parking at the start of this road

and hiking it to access the 3 Wilderness trails at the end of the road, including two 14er trails. A portion of this road also passes through a segment of the Elk Mountain-Collegiate North upper tier Roadless area.

- **Oppose conversion of roads that access designated facilities (such as hiking trailheads) from passenger car accessible roads (maintenance level 3) to 4WD roads (maintenance level 2) roads.**

Most people do not own a specialized high clearance four wheeled drive vehicle. Converting roads that are accessible to regular passenger cars to 4WD roads will restrict motorized access to facilities to only those that have specialized vehicles. Regular standard passenger cars are either discouraged or prohibited from using maintenance level 2 roads.

User comfort, convenience, and speed of travel are not management considerations for maintenance level 2 and 4WD roads. No provisions are made to warn users regarding hazards on 4WD roads. Maintenance level 2 road users must assume additional risks because fallen trees, potholes, washouts and other obstacles may be present without warning.

Examples: Oppose a proposed conversion of Salida District road 344A Road into the Cottonwood Lake Picnic Area to a 4WD road. This will hinder access for picnickers, anglers, and to improved facilities for disabled anglers.

Oppose a proposed conversion of Pikes Peak District Road 300 Rampart Range Road from passenger car accessible to 4WD vehicle access. This road provides motorized access to numerous designated recreation facilities and areas used by quiet recreationists.

- **Support prohibiting motorcycle use on trails that are predominantly used by hikers.**

The speed, noise, dust of motorcycle use on trails results in compromised experiences and safety for quiet users of the same trail. Motorcycle use on trails can result in conflict that can displace quiet users from those trails.

Examples: Support prohibiting motorcycle use on the Salida District Pass Creek #1412 and Poplar Gulch Trail #1436 Trails. Trail camera data and trail register information indicates that the vast majority of use on these trails is by hikers, and conflict between hikers and motorcyclists has been documented.

- **Oppose proposed conversion of roads to motorized trails that access quiet use trails.**

This will result in conflicts and may require use of specialized motor vehicles for future access. Motorized trails may be maintained to lower standards than roads, (they can be steeper, narrower and have tighter turns) which may compromise safety and protection of the environment. It may be more difficult to drive a full-sized licensed motor vehicle on a motorized trail as opposed to a road. Motorized users will be required to purchase an additional annual vehicle registration fee to use a motorized trail. Motorized trails may attract more recreational OHV use than motorized roads.

Examples: San Carlos District Road 580, which is cherry stemmed into Roadless, Wilderness, and accesses a Wilderness Trail used to climb the 14er Mt Lindsey, is proposed to become a motorized trail in Alternative D.

This should be opposed. In this situation, the possibility of converting the end segment of a rough, narrow dead end road into a non-motorized trail should be considered.

- **Support closure of or extensive specific maintenance of routes near streams, lakes and riparian areas.**

Routes near and in lakes streams, creeks and riparian areas can result in erosion and siltation of water and these waterways. Vehicles disturb and compact soil and vegetation, modifying slope hydrology and important riparian ecosystems. Runoff from routes can end up in surface water and some routes are hydrologically connected to streams so that rainwater or snowmelt flows directly into the surface water. Toxic particles and fluids wash off vehicles when they ford waterways. Dispersed camping next to surface water can result in ashes, fecal material, toxic fluids, etc. in water.

Both the Forest Plan and the DEIS contain direction to restrict road use near surface water and not parallel streams.

Examples: The end of Salida District Road 210 is hydrologically connected to Pass Creek. The creek is immediately adjacent to the road and a trailhead parking area. Runoff from these vehicle use areas flows directly into the creek < 2 feet away.