



## Celebrate 25 Years of Saving Wild Places

Your donations support conservation of wild places in central Colorado



November 17, 2020

Hello \*{{First Name}}\* ,

Wild Connections is asking for your support over the next few weeks. Your donations will help us continue a vigorous and proactive approach to the challenges and opportunities that come with the new federal administration both now and in early 2021.

### **Travel and Wild Places**

One of the challenges is ensuring that the Pike-San Isabel National Forest (PSI) travel system is adequate for sustainable human uses, secure wildlife habitat and other forest uses.

The PSI has more than 500 miles of motorized trails for dirtbikes, ATVs, and other off-highway vehicles and more than 2,000 mile of paved and unpaved roads, many leftover from a bygone era of timber and mining. When our human travel is increased, wildlife habitat and wild places are diminished.

#### **Motorized travel on the PSI**

For several years the PSI has been working on a court ordered revision of the Motorized Vehicle Use plan (MVUM). Hundreds of stakeholders made detailed recommendations on how they believed the motorized travel system should play out on the ground.

Wild Connections drew on our roadless area inventories and recent monitoring to make general and specific route-by-route management recommendations.



Lee Patton checked FR 220 that WC recommended for decommissioning. Photo John Stansfield

#### **MVUM plan released in November**

The PSI [Draft Record of Decision for Motorized Travel \(MVUM\)](#) is the result of that process. When finalized, it will define motorized use for the foreseeable future.


Forest Supervisor Diana Trujillo said:

*... Alternative C meets the purpose and need for this project by providing for a system of roads and trails designated for motor vehicle use by class of vehicle and time of year, as specified in the TMR, and by minimizing adverse effects on natural resources. By implementing Alternative C, the PSI will clarify which roads and trails are open to motor vehicle use, will prohibit driving off roads or trails designated for motor vehicle use, and will amend the PSI Forest Plan.*

Wild Connections is still reviewing the details, but it appears that Alt. C is, for the most part, a reasonable plan.

**USDA**  
United States Department of Agriculture

**Draft Record of Decision  
Pike and San Isabel National Forests  
Motorized Travel Management (MVUM)  
Analysis**



US Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region November 2020

## **Wildcat Canyon, an example of the impact of the new MVUM**

### **The South Platte River gorge**

Wildcat Canyon is a place we've been paying attention to since 1995 when we first inventoried the roadless boundaries. The South Platte River flows through this 1,200 ft. deep gorge, and it is one of the few healthy habitats in the Hayman burn area for large game mammals, birds of prey, migrating songbirds, and wild trout.



Hikers at the riverside. Photo Curt Nimz

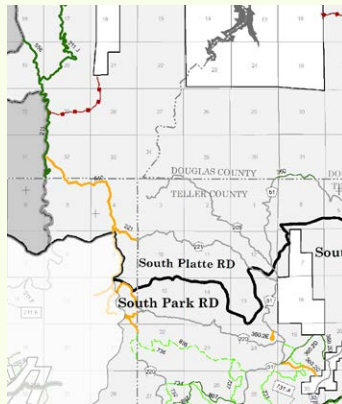
### **Illegal use today**

Routes down to the river were closed to motorized use after the Hayman fire, but illegal OHV activity and riding in the river continues as shown in these photos by John Szutkowski.



### **What will the PSI travel plan do for Wildcat?**

So what does the MVUM say about 540? In spite of efforts by some motorized users who want to re-open it, 540 is shown as "decommissioned" (the yellow route from center left). And make no mistake; there will be some vocal opposition to this provision.



[Road decommissioning](#) is defined by the Forest Service as: "Activities that result in the stabilization and restoration of unneeded roads to a more natural state."

### **The more natural Wildcat Canyon of the future**

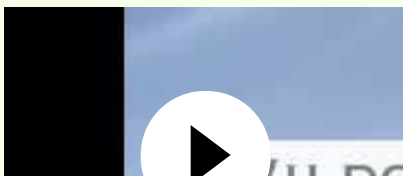
In 2021, Forest Service, Wild Connections and a coalition of local and regional groups will move vigorously toward that "more natural state." The treatments may include:

- Block entrance
- Revegetation and waterbarring
- Remove fills and culverts
- Establish drainageways and remove unstable road shoulders
- Full obliteration recontouring and restoring natural slopes



The current access to 540 is only partially secure pending heavy machinery restoration work. Photo Jean C Smith

### **Here's what you can do now**

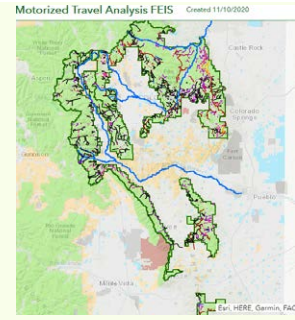




Enjoy a few minutes on this virtual hike into Wildcat Canyon with Jim Lockhart and Claude Neumann. Video Misi Ballard and Bronson Eguchi.



Take a do-it-yourself hike/snowshoe into Wildcat Canyon. Take FR 211 Matukat Rd to about 39° 08' 12" N and 105° 22' 03" W. Walk along 540. Down to the River is nearly 3 miles and 1,300' elevation change. But even a foray of several hundred yards will give you great views. Photo Jean C Smith



Explore the MVUM Alt. C maps for any part of the PSI with this [interactive map](#) created by Alison Gallensky and [Rocky Mountain Wild](#).

### Support Wild Connections' work on travel management

Your donation to Wild Connections **Saving Wild Places** funding campaign will provide the solid base of income for innovative and effective programs in 2021. If you've already sent a donation, **thank you**.

Wild Connections participates in the [Pikes Peak region Give!](#) and [Colorado Gives Day](#) Click either button below to go to the secure websites. Colorado Gives Day is Dec. 8, but you can [preschedule](#) your gift right now! Or click [Donate Now](#) to go to our web page for a mail-in form.



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All the best, and please stay safe,

Jim, John, Alison, Claude, Karl, Misi, Kristin and John  
Wild Connections Board and staff

#### Our Contact Information

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