



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and
Gunnison National Forests
2250 Highway 50
Delta, CO 81416
Voice: 970-874-6600
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Rio Grande National Forest
1803 W. Highway 160
Monte Vista, CO 81144
Voice: 719-852-5941
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File Code: 1950/2350

Date: June 7, 2013

Dear Interested Party:

The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) and Rio Grande (RGNF) National Forests have prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the *Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) and The Colorado Trail (CT) Reroute Lujan to La Garita Wilderness*. This EA analyzed moving the CDNST/CT trail off its current alignment which often was coincident with roads and motorized trails below the Continental Divide on the GMUG to a non-motorized trail alignment on or close to the Continental Divide which is also the boundary of the two forests in Saguache County, Colorado. Five alternatives were considered in detail in the EA (No Action (Alternative 1), Alternatives 2 and 4 considered hiker/horse only uses, Alternatives 3 & 5 considered hiker, horse and mechanized use). Based upon our review of the EA and other supporting analyses, we have selected Alternative 5 as analyzed in the EA. Under Alternative 5 we have:

- Approved the location and construction of approximately 31.2 miles of new trail CDNST/ CT from the Skyline Trail (#465) in the La Garita Mountains to Lujan Pass.
- Approved the location and construction of a 0.9 mile spur trail to connect the CDNST/CT to Luder's Campground.
- Designated the following uses for both trails: biking, horseback riding and hiking. Motorized use is prohibited.
- Approved the location and construction of an approximately ¼ acre parking area (trailhead) at the top of North Pass (Hwy 114) on the south side of the road which will include a single CXT vaulted toilet.
- Approved the location and construction of an approximately ¼ acre parking area (trailhead) at Luder's Campground.
- Approved the decommissioning of approximately 2.0 miles of non-motorized trail on the GMUG NF following construction of the new trail.

The conservation measures as described in the EA are also included in our decision which includes protection for: scenery, Canada lynx, wildlife crossing highway, cultural/paleontological resources, watershed, range fences/gates and prevention of noxious weeds.

Based on our review of the EA and administrative file regarding the current and anticipated uses of the trail, we recommend either Trail Class 2 or Trail Class 3 with the designed use of Bicycle to minimize impacts on vegetation, minimize impacts from erosion, and to have appropriate obstacle height while accommodating all anticipated users in the safest manner possible. Trail Class establishment is not an activity subject to appeal as it is primarily an engineering analysis.

Forests will work cooperatively with volunteers on the construction and continued maintenance of the trail as funding and opportunities are available. Construction is not anticipated to begin until 2014.



Additional details of our decision can be found in either the Decision Notice or the EA both available for download on the internet at the following link:

http://www.fs.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsinternet!/ut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3hvXxMjMz8Dc0P_kFALA09zLzNDowAXYwMLE_2CbEdFANocRhE!/?project=31283

Our decision is subject to administrative review pursuant to Federal Regulations at 36 CFR 215. Appeals (including attachments) must be in writing and filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service) with the Appeal Deciding Officer (§ 215.8) within 45 days following the date of publication of a legal notice of this decision in the *Grand Junction Daily Sentinel* and *Valley Courier* (date will be calculated by whichever paper publishes later). Attachments received after the 45-day appeal period will not be considered. The publication date of the legal notice in the newspaper(s) of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal (§ 215.15 (a)). Those wishing to appeal should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

The appeal must be filed (regular mail, fax, email, hand-delivery, or express delivery) with the Appeal Deciding Officer at:

Appeals Deciding Officer
U.S.D.A. Forest Service
Rocky Mountain Region
740 Simms Street
Golden, CO 80401
Fax: 303-275-5134 to the attention of Appeals
Email: appeals-rocky-mountain-regional-office@fs.fed.us

The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. Electronic appeals must be submitted in a format such as an e-mail message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or MSWord (.doc). In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

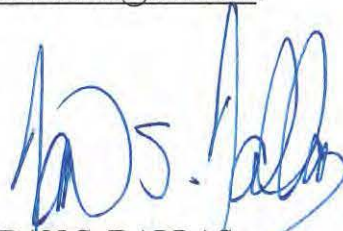
Individuals or organizations who expressed interest during the comment period (identified as the scoping period in early 2010 or comment period on the EA in late 2012) specified at 36 CFR 215.6 may appeal this decision. The notice of appeal must meet the appeal content requirements at 36 CFR 215.14.

For more information about this project or to obtain document copies in another format, please contact Niccole Mortenson at 406-329-3163 or nmortenson@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,



SCOTT G. ARMENTROUT
Forest Supervisor



DAN S. DALLAS
Forest Supervisor