

IV. Motorized Recreation Route Recommendations

The following roads and trails are recommended by COHVCO, in addition to those in the preliminary proposed alternative, and those submitted as a group recommendation in the Colorado 500 letter dated 15 September 2006. These are intended to be a part of an alternative in the DEIS that more fully responds and addresses a historic and enhanced motorized recreation transportation system for all federal lands in the Gunnison Basin.

Recommendations

- 1. Trail 561 Eyrie Basin Trail.** An historically used trail by miners and modern day single track motorcyclists. From Italian Creek Road, it drops steeply into Eyrie Creek Basin where it connects to the Taylor Park Road. This trail accesses private land, but has a landowner interested in maintaining public motorized use.
- 2. Trail 413 Matchless Mountain Trail.** An historical use trail that is a single track motorcycle use trail leading from near the top of Matchless Mountain on the west to the west side of Taylor Reservoir where it heads north to a crossing of the Taylor River just above Rivers End Campground. Scenic route from a 12,300 foot peak to the Reservoir's Edge, and ridden almost exclusively downhill. Access to Trail 413 is off of Trail 424, the Gunnison Spur Trail. It provides challenge for advanced riders in a low use area.
- 3. Trail 424 Spur Trail Connector.** Connects from the Dinner Station Campground to Road 753.1. A historically used motorcycle trail. The route provides a continuity of access to the entire Spur Trail System from the Taylor Park Road.
- 4. Trail 424 Spur Connector Trail South.** From Doctor Park to the north, connecting to the North Bank Campground at Taylor Canyon Road. This trail has had specific OHV funds utilized over the years for trail maintenance. We understand that the trail is to be closed because of issues with bighorn sheep. If there is a concern about bighorn sheep escape cover, then they are also bothered by hikers, mountain bikers, and horsemen. We accept the seasonal closure from March 15 to June 15, but the trail needs to remain open for motorcycles for continuation of the Spur Trail system to the Harmel Guest Ranch such trail use supports their business.

- 5. Unnamed Trail from Spring Creek Reservoir Road Trail 880 to Italian Mt. Road.** This connecting trail was created in 1983 to connect Italian Mountain Road back down to the Spring Creek area initially for a permitted enduro loop. Since then, it has been used heavily and serves as a loop back from Star Trail at the Lapin Mine or Flag Creek.
- 6. Unnamed Trail linking Star Trail (Mysterious Lake) 411 to Upper Spring Creek Road 880.** This trail was created in approximately 1980 to allow a loop from the Star Trail back to the Spring Creek area. This trail does not show up on new USFS map.
- 7. Unnamed Trail linking Middle Brush Creek Road back to the Pearl Pass Road over Timbered/Carbonate Hill.** This trail is near the access point to Twin Lakes and has been used since 1980, and more recently as a loop route for riders going over Pearl Pass. This trail does not show on latest USFS map.
- 8. Proposed new motorcycle/ATV Trail.** This trail would be located on the west and south side of the Taylor River, north from Dorchester Campground to the end of Taylor Park Road to avoid having motorcycles and ATV's on the Taylor Park Road. This is an effort to reduce a mixed traffic and potential public road safety situation. This would achieve the same safety objectives for motorized use as the new non-motorized (mechanized) mountain bike trail that the Forest Service created as the Kebler Pass By-pass route (Crested Butte to Kebler Pass).
- 9. Farris Creek Trail.** This is an extension of Road 736.1a. This trail has been used for decades to provide a continuity of access to other trails in the area including: Strand Hill, 407, 408, 402, 556, Middle Brush Creek and Tiocalli Ridge Trail. This area has many old mining roads, should remain open for motorized use, and is an important connector loop for Double Top (405), Block and Tackle (545) system.
- 10. Crest Trail 906.1a.** This trail, from Monarch Pass to Marshall Pass, has been a single track motorized trail for over 50 years. This trail provides the only access to other motorized and mechanized single-track trails like Agate Creek, North Fooses Creek, Lime Creek and Greens Creek, and is the key connection with the motorized systems on the San Isabel and Rio Grande National Forests. The closure of this trail eliminates over 10 miles of single track trail, and the continuity of a long established system. The Crest Trail is a mixture of 4WD access roads, and

only a single track trail for a few miles in the middle section, as it is accessed by 4WD roads from both the north and south. OHV recreation funds have been utilized to maintain this trail, as well as many hours of volunteer labor from motorcycle clubs. The planning process and DEIS need to disclose the agreements made years ago by the Colorado Trail (CT) and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) managers that there would be no eliminations of motorized use of the trail during their respective implementation processes. Realignment of trails like the shared North Pass Trail, south of Marshall Pass to Windy Point, is an example of how the Colorado Trail was managed to accommodate changed use. This, Crest Trail, motorized route needs to be retained so as to respect historic use, not to further diminish motorized opportunities, especially in the semi-primitive settings that are shrinking in the ROS inventory. See Appendix 6 for more detailed discussion on this Trail.

- 11. Beaver Creek – April Gulch: 447 and 726.** This is a critical recommendation. The area of this trail needs to be reevaluated during the DEIS process. It eliminates the only motorized single-track trail, from Ohio Pass to Highway 50. This trail has been maintained by local motorcycle user groups for over 40 years, including a foot bridge to eliminate contact with a critical trout stream. This trail does not interfere with the greenback trout issue. The trail only crosses Beaver Creek once, and then exits the area over an existing BLM road that connects to the BLM Land End Road, 726. Even though supported by the BLM as a viable motorized route, it was dropped by the planning team on the Preliminary map. The concept was resubmitted in June 2007 with more detail. A seasonal closure and one-way route designation is possible for this route. It appears that this is an attempt to create a buffer for the West Elk Wilderness, contrary to wilderness establishment legislation.
- 12. Green Lake Trail 565, 566 and 436.** With the closure of these trails and Green Lake to motorized recreation (off Kebler and Ohio Passes), the TMP completely eliminates all motorized single-track trails on the west side from Crested Butte to Gunnison. This does not sustain or enhance recreation opportunity, forcing all motorcycle riders to use the congested roads shared by all other forms of transportation.
- 13. Trails 423 and 423 Spur (Now renamed trail) 559 and 560.** These trails have been used continuously by motorized users since 1982. While there have been some private land access issues, use has been uninterrupted for 25 years. The official

recorded plat for the Cement Creek subdivision of Cement Creek at Crested Butte South, recorded January 2, 1991, establishes a provision for homeowners to access the national forest via motorcycles. That spur #560, starts on Cement Creek and hooks into the Roaring Judy Trail along with the main trunk of Trail 423 that does so approximately .25 miles south of where the spur hooks in. There is the connecting trail that links these from Eccher Gulch to lower Cement Mountain that does not show on the latest Forest Service mapping.

- 14. Unnamed Trail paralleling Cement Creek Road between Hunter Hill #410 and Waterfall Creek Trail.** This trail is unmarked on the new Forest Service map, but has been historically used to get from one end of Cement Creek to the other without having to ride the road. This is a potential safety issue and a loss to the motorized system.
- 15. Waterfall Creek Trail 406.** Trail #406 is actually shown as a single track motorcycle trail on the proposed transportation system map, but if combined with the associated trails 405, 406 and 412 would create a loop system available to all other single track users.
- 16. Agate Creek Trail 484.** This is an historic single track trail that has been maintained by the Texas Sidewinders Motorcycle (MC) Club, and several Colorado M/C clubs. In addition, this trail has had CO State OHV funds utilized to maintain the trail. This trail serves all user groups, but is primarily a MC trail that connects the Lime Creek, Crest Trail and Fooses Creek Trails. This trail is one of the primary trails in the Monarch Pass-Marshall Pass trail system.
- 17. Route 243.3E.** This 4WD road provides an additional access to the Crest Trail/CT/CDNST areas. It is one of the few 4WD roads that provide a challenging route for MC/ATV/4WD. The closure of this road for motorized access does nothing to enhance the area. We strongly suggest that this 4WD road remain on the motorized system.
- 18. New Connector.** This trail when added would join trail 501 on the north to 874 on the south and create a loop with: 501-487-486-785-816A-816-874.1D-874. This trail system provides an additional single track opportunity in the Razor Ridge area. This area is a prime example of a national forest area that can be enlarged to include more single track motorized trails. These trails can also be used by other user groups including mountain

bikes, equestrians, and hikers. This entire area should be considered for expanded motorized recreation.

- 19. Trail 499-878.** Maintain as a single track on the motorized system. This trail area is an example of the CT taking over a historic motorized trail. This trail off the Cochetopa Pass is the only route that can connect the area for any motorized recreation. This is not a trail, but an old 4WD road. This trail should remain motorized the same as the Crest Trail. The CT and the CDNST organizations should not be allowed to take over historic trail routes just to establish a convenient non-motorized route. There are routes in this area that can be built to accommodate the CT or CDNST demand, without having to take an historic motorized route.
- 20. Trail 465/472.1A.** Maintain as a single track on the motorized system. This trail should remain motorized to support the very limited motorized trails in the area. There are many 4WD routes in this area, which could be allowed to revert to single track opportunities, which would enhance a very limited motorized recreation area. This area does have the capability to be enlarged to include more motorized trails and 4WD routes.
- 21. Trail 538 to 913.** This system, west of Sargents, and just north of US 50 needs to be kept on the motorized system. This trail should remain motorized to continue a complete motorized route from Black Sage Pass to Highway 50. While this area has many 4WD routes, there are few single track motorized routes. This trail when connected to the Quake Trail will provide a very nice, complete loop for motorized single track recreation.
- 22. Trails 677.3 and 677.3C.** This trail opportunity needs to remain in the motorized system and considered in conjunction with #21 above. This is a complete single track trail system that connects the entire area out of the Sargents/Tomichi Trading Post area. This area has very high usage by locals and out of state OHV users. This is one of the primary routes that beginners use in learning how to participate in OHV recreation.
- 23. Trail 461.** This trail needs to be added to create a looped single track opportunity about 5-6 miles east of Lake City. This is the Cannibal Plateau that has been an historic motorized recreation area. For unknown reasons, this trail has been closed without proper notice or NEPA analysis. This is the only motorized recreation area near Lake City and is the only motorized single

track trail in the area. No other single track motorized route has been left open. It is a complete loop system working off of the Slumgullion Pass area. This route also provides motorized access to the two Wilderness areas to the north. This trail needs to remain open to support a motorized loop recreation opportunity.

24. New Trail Head. This is a strong recommendation to develop a trail head and parking facility along Gunnison County Road SCR on a tract of BLM public land. This would greatly enhance the management of and access to the motorized trail systems in the area south of Highway 50.

25. Trail System Connection 786, 789,789.2B, 775, 854.2A, 854 (south) to BLM 3073. This suggested route designation will connect the several existing FS and BLM motorized routes into one continuous motorized route from the north areas of the Sawtooth to the Old Agency area of Los Pinos Pass. All of these routes are motorized and should be connected to provide an increase in OHV recreation opportunities. This area can be expanded to provide relief of OHV pressure on Taylor Park and other areas. This area south of Highway 50 represents a vast opportunity for expanded OHV recreation. This route suggestion is just one of many routes/areas for the FS and BLM to consider.

26. 1. BLM CR8 with FS 806. This is a 4WD road that already exists through private property and a wet lands area, that is used extensively by locals. There needs to be some connecting routes for all recreation purposes, and not just locals. This would be a very short route to avoid the private property and the wet lands.

26. 2. This recommendation coincides with 26.1 above. However, it connects FS 4WD 806 with the BLM roads to the northeast. We have no knowledge of any user developed routes in this area, but if option **26.1** above cannot be implemented, then this option could suffice to meet the same goal of providing a north to south route from Highway 50 to the Los Pinos Road.

26. 3. East – West Corridor FS 4WD 807 to BLM West Roads. This suggestion will provide the east to west corridor through the same areas as **26.1 and 26.2** above. Several routes already exist in this area, but go through private property. If rights-of-ways, cannot be obtained, we suggest that a new route be developed that will connect the FS road to the BLM road system. Several user developed routes already exist, but an official BLM Route map would help eliminate future user created routes.

- 26. 4. FS 4WD 808 to FS 4WD 821.** This route will enlarge a FS developed and user develop system in the area.
- 27. Splains Gulch. Route 858 to 858.1 to Ohio Pass Road.** This Route is currently in place and can provide a motorized single track by-pass of the Kebler Pass Road. **This is the same as the FS has done for the mountain bike by-pass route on the north side of the Kebler Pass Road.** The Splains Gulch area is a historic motorized route that can be easily converted to support all user groups and their recreation needs.
- 28. Low Line Trail Area 438 to BLM 818.** This area is a perfect example of a “defacto wilderness area” that the Forest Service has allowed to develop over the years. This entire area is hardly used by any group, due to its isolation and only has access from the north and south. The rest of the access is blocked by private land. This area by default has become a “private playground” for the local land owners that do not allow any access to the area. Making this a designated motorized route would greatly enhance the OHV recreation opportunities, and also reduce the amount of OHV traffic on the Ohio Pass Road. This one area the Forest Service should consider for single track motorized recreation, completing a loop single track system from the Green Lake, Slains Gulch area to the Lands End area to Highway 50. This loop would by-pass the heavily used Kebler and Ohio Pass roads.
- 29. Connect 807 to 559.** This connector can be easily accomplished to make a complete loop OHV route in the area. Trails and roads already exist in this area that could be used to establish the loop. This is also an historic route area call the “Old Stage Coach Route”. This entire area should be considered for an expansion to gain the associated OHV recreation benefits.
- 30. Connect 854 to 806.** This is an historic motorized route that exists today. The route has been overgrown from lack of use, but there are still Forest Service trail signs in the area stating that single track motorized use is authorized. This route was apparently closed (for questionable reasons) without complete notification or NEPA evaluation. We strongly suggest that this area be considered for expanded OHV/single track recreation, and that this route be reopened.

Recommendations for: Gunnison Basin Four Wheel Drive Roads

COHVCO additionally endorses and recommends that the routes and levels of challenge for the four wheel drive routes identified and illustrated in: **Wells, Charles A. 2005. Guide to Colorado Backroads and 4-Wheel Drive Trails. 2nd Edition. FunTreks, Inc. Monument, CO.** The Basin Travel planning team has already recognized these routes, and they have been included in the Preliminary Transportation System for the Gunnison Basin Travel Plan process. They should also be carried into any DEIS alternative. See cited cover page and maps in Appendix 5. Permission for the use of this material has been granted by the author, Charles A. Wells.

Motorized Trail Support on Existing System

Support for a set of motorized trails has previously been submitted, see Appendix 5, Colorado 500 letter, 15 September 2006, but is re-presented and included here to help consolidate information in one place: The supported routes follow: See following pages inserted.