



February 1, 2014

Arapahoe Roosevelt National Forest
Att: Glenn Casamasa, Forest Supervisor
Center Drive, Suite
Fort Collins CO

RE: Lefthand Canyon OHV area

Dear Mr. Casamasa;

The Organizations above are contacting you regarding the status and importance of the restoration of the Lefthand Canyon OHV area on the Boulder Ranger District following the floods that decimated a large amount of the Arapahoe Roosevelt National Forest last year. Prior to addressing the specific concerns regarding the importance of the Lefthand OHV area, a brief summary of each Organization is needed. The Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition ("COHVCO") is a grassroots advocacy organization of approximately 150,000 registered OHV users in Colorado seeking to represent, assist, educate, and empower all OHV recreationists in the protection and promotion of off-highway motorized recreation throughout Colorado. COHVCO is an environmental organization that advocates and promotes the responsible use and conservation of our public lands and natural resources to preserve their aesthetic and recreational qualities for future generations.

The Trail Preservation Alliance ("TPA") is a 100 percent volunteer organization whose intention is to be a viable partner, working with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to preserve the sport of trail riding. The TPA acts as an advocate of the sport and takes the necessary action to insure that the USFS and BLM allocate to trail riding a fair and equitable percentage of access to public lands.

As your office is intimately aware of, restoration of the damage from the unprecedented flooding that impacted the much of the northern front range and many of the recreational opportunities that are provided by the Arapahoe/Roosevelt National Forest is a daunting task without taking into account the several large burn areas that have also impacted the Arapahoe/Roosevelt over the last several years. Establishing a prioritized response and plan for

this issue is a daunting task that will include make many difficult decisions, prior to ever putting a shovel on the ground. The OHV community stands ready to assist in the restoration efforts, both with grants from the Colorado State Parks OHV grant program and volunteer support which could range from directly assisting in repairing trails, mobilizing resources, coordinating efforts of volunteers and in any other way that may arise as restoration efforts move forward.

The Organizations are aware that a preliminary priority list has been developed for the Forest based on aerial surveys and limited site analysis and that the Forest is currently developing a more complete prioritization and restoration plan once more information on impacted sites has been obtained. The Organizations anticipate that many of the more dispersed recreational opportunity areas on the Arapahoe/Roosevelt will fall lower on the restoration priority list than more intensively developed sites that have been impacted by the flooding and fires. The Organizations believe this is good management but that these decisions should not be made entirely based on levels of development of recreational resources that might be present, as there are highly valued opportunities that could be overlooked.

One such area would be the Lefthand Canyon OHV area outside Boulder Colorado on the Boulder Ranger district. The Organizations are contacting you to let you know the high value that our members place on access to this area. The Lefthand Canyon OHV area is identified as an OHV area but truly provides multiple use recreational opportunities to a wide range of recreational users including hikes, bikers, hunter, and recreational shooters. The opportunities provided by the Lefthand Canyon OHV area are unique given their proximity to population centers, as many recreationalists are able to use this area after work or on their lunch break and directly improve these users quality of life. These recreational activities are made even more unique as local municipal parks and green spaces are not able to provide any opportunity for these user groups on their facilities. The loss of the Lefthand Canyon area for a prolonged period of time would directly impact these users a great deal.

It is our understanding that the prioritization of restoration of the Lefthand Canyon OHV area would be warranted on a cost/benefit analysis comparison as well. While many of the more developed recreational areas on the Arapahoe/Roosevelt have been almost destroyed by the flooding, the Lefthand Canyon OHV area has sustained minimal impacts as only a short portion of the access road has been damaged. The Lefthand Canyon area also was not significantly impacted by wildfires, as many other sites have been on the Arapahoe/Roosevelt simplifying any restoration efforts that may need to be undertaken. While the true impacts to the area are not fully known due to the complete closure of the area, there are several access points that could be used for the public in order to avoid any unsafe or heavily impacted areas. While many of the other routes and trails in the area have been slightly impacted by the flooding,

repair of these impacts would generally not be necessary as these conditions provide for a more challenging recreational opportunity for trails users. That would be welcomed by our members.

Lefthand Canyon also has had extensive planning and upgrading recently, which has directly contributed to the minimal impacts that the area has experienced. This planning has also streamlined any changes that might need to be made to address site specific issues and this planning has been implemented on a large scale in the Lefthand Canyon area. This implementation has included the significant expenditures of grant moneys on the trails, which should be taken into account when prioritizing the restoration of the area.

The final factor we would like to bring to your attention is the strong support that management of this area has received from several local clubs, including the Boulder County Trail Riders and Trail Ridge Runners OHV club. These clubs are aware of the unique opportunity provided by the Lefthand Canyon area and have prolonged commitments to assisting in this area and the rest of the motorized routes on the Boulder Ranger district. These are partner organizations stand ready willing and able to assist in the restoration of the Lefthand Canyon area with a minimal amount of notice. These clubs have demonstrated a strong commitment to partnering for this area and with the impacts of the flooding this commitment is stronger now than ever. Many facilities with far higher levels of facility development to not have the ongoing public support that these clubs have provided to the Boulder Ranger district for an extended period of time. Loss of these partner organizations would directly impact both the Lefthand Canyon area but also volunteer efforts on many other routes in the Boulder Ranger district. Such a risk could be avoided with a heightened priority placed on restoration of the Lefthand Canyon OHV area.

The Lefthand Canyon OHV area is also one of the few areas on the Arapahoe/Roosevelt National Forest where more intensive multiple use recreation is permitted under the Forest Plan. With the consistently expanding demand for multiple use recreational activity, management areas such as these are important to resource for land managers and should not be overlooked. The Organizations believe this factor alone warrants a priority restoration of the Lefthand Canyon area.

The Organizations appreciate the scope of the efforts from your office in addressing the impacts of the recent flooding. We hope that this correspondence assists you in making the best decisions possible.

Sincerely,

