



June 23, 2022

U.S.D.A. Forest Service
Rocky Mountain Region
Attn: Frank Beum, Regional Forester
1617 Cole Blvd
Lakewood, CO 80401

Dear Mr. Beum:

The Trails Preservation Alliance (TPA) calls on the U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife and Routt County to stop the Rainbow Family gathering planned on national forest lands in Adams Park this July 1-7. As many as 30,000 could gather in Routt County for this unauthorized and unpermitted activity in the midst of elk calving and critical wildlife and riparian habitat. The TPA is a volunteer organization created to be a viable partner to public lands managers, working with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to preserve multiple-use recreation.

The Forest Service has acknowledged that large group gatherings have significant adverse impacts on forest resources and public health and safety. These include the spread of disease, pollution and trash, soil compaction and damage to archaeological sites, riparian areas and wildlife. Species listed under the Endangered Species Act such as the gray wolf and Canada lynx could also be adversely affected by the hordes. At a prior gathering near Paonia in 1992, over 15,000 people with some 4,500 dogs parked over 4,000 vehicles on meadows within the national forest. Imagine how this works with a “leave no trace philosophy.” There are no public restrooms or porta potties at these gatherings.

As a steward of the National Forests, the Forest Service has a duty to minimize resource impacts. This gathering runs afoul of the forest plan and surely violates state and local public health laws and regulations for (a) The sufficiency of sanitation facilities; (b) The sufficiency of waste-disposal facilities; (c) The availability of sufficient potable drinking water; (d) The risk of disease from the physical characteristics of the proposed site or natural conditions associated with the proposed site; and (e) The risk of contamination of critical water supplies. As prior gatherings have shown, it also poses a very real danger to public safety.

As a result, TPA has encouraged its members and the public to speak out against this environmental catastrophe and to sign and support the petition of Keep Routt Wild to prevent it: [Petition · Halt the Routt National Forest Rainbow Family Gathering Now · Change.org](#).

The TPA ardently supports multiple uses of public lands including motorized access to roads and trails. In fact, Colorado’s off-highway vehicle fees are the primary funding source for trails maintenance projects that benefit all users--motorized and non-motorized

alike. TPA associates are obligated to follow the ever-complex and restrictive myriad of federal laws and regulations governing their recreation and access to national forest and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. It is unwise, unfair and unlawful to hold the vast majority of the recreating public to different standards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CH' with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Chad Hixon
Executive Director
Trails Preservation Alliance

CC: The Hon. John Hickenlooper
The Hon. Michael Bennett
The Hon. Lauren Boebert
Dan Gibbs, Director, Colorado Dept. of Nat. Resources
Heather Dugan, Acting Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Routt County Board of Commissioners
Bill Jackson, U.S. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region
Jason Robertson, U.S. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region
Russ Bacon, Medicine Bow Routt National Forest Supervisor
Michael Woodbridge, Hahn Peaks Bears Ears District Ranger
Mary Bedwell, Medicine Bow Public Affairs