

I write this email to emphatically support Keep Routt Wild!!! I have seen some of the letters delivered to you, the decision makers, regarding the new bike trails to be constructed north and east of Steamboat. While the various biking groups/individuals and the opponents (Keep Routt Wild) have publicly represented a desire to work together for the common good of wildlife and their habitat I am not really seeing any acknowledgement of the concern by the trail proponents, in fact it appears that the opposition has only entrenched the proponents. It is my understanding you have been deluged via email, phone calls, and personal contact. lobbying for “more is better” a call to action, if you will.

I completely agree with others opinions that when the vote for trails was overwhelmingly approved, “nobody” believed that this meant the City was going to go out and build/fund miles upon miles upon miles of trails through the National Forest. Nor that the Forest Service would ever agree to such a massive encroachment. When I voted for the Trails Initiative I believed the money would be spent on improving expanding the Core Trail and other established biking/hiking trails, which would in effect give the bikers/hikers better and expanded opportunities. without encroaching in to most habitat outside the urban core/influence zone.

In reviewing the **Steamboat Springs Community Area Plan jointly adopted by the City of Steamboat and Routt County in May of 2004**, Chapter 7, 7-5 and 7-6 have a **Goal NS-3**: Our community will identify critical wetland areas and critical wildlife habitats, and enhance and conserve these areas for current and future generations. **Policy NS-3.2: New development will be designed to respect Wildlife Habitat:** (with the following bullet points)

- Be sited and designed to not interfere with wildlife habitat;
- Protect wildlife habitat on private and public land;
- Minimize conflicts between wildlife and human uses;
- Minimize impacts on migration corridors by siting housing away from the corridors, minimizing fencing, allowing for migration through the property;
- Minimize fragmentation of wildlife habitat by identifying tracts of land and movement corridors necessary for wildlife, time and phase construction activities to avoid impacts of development, and
- The city and county should review cumulative impacts on wildlife caused by recreation use, developments and other plans.

So as we (Keep Routt Wild) have confessed and apologized for many times our coming late to this party, could be (as in my case) explained that we’ve already been here and felt that our elected leaders would uphold the Goals and Policies identified in such a broad community document as the Community Plan. I believe it is time for the city and the county to review the cumulative impacts on wildlife caused by recreation use. and stop 40,70,110 miles of biking trails through the heritage of our county and forests,wildlife habitat.

I have been a resident of Routt County for 63 years, my family has owned a ranch up Elk River since the 1920's, my first tenure on what was the Routt County Regional Planning Commission began in March of 1992 and ran until March of 2002. I was asked to return, and in January of 2019 will begin my 14<sup>th</sup> year of service to the Routt County Planning Commission. I got my first deer when I was 12 years old and my first elk the next year. So yes I am a hunter, I joined the RMEF in 1984 and bought a life membership and continue to ardently support the efforts of the RMEF because without their conservation efforts elk and all the sub species have little chance of survival.

During my first tenure on the Planning Commission I was proud to assist in inventing what is now Land Preservation Subdivision regulations, whereby landowners/ developers have the ability to sub-divide their land in ways other than 35 acre parcels. One of the goals is to sit aside large blocks of land often we have been able to have development yet still set aside hundreds of acres/open space for the benefit of wildlife, production areas, calving grounds, winter range, and migration corridors. This type of cluster development had never before been done before in the State of Colorado. The voters of Routt County have voted yes (twice) to tax themselves to Purchase Development Rights, which to date has "set aside" some 56,000 acres in Routt County.

One of my biggest concerns is that mountain biking occurs 24-7-365, I saw an ad for a new bike light, made in Denver I think. I remember it is \$175.00. You see wildlife usually want to feed during evening and at night.....think of the speed limit signs you see on the highway drops to 55 MPH from 5 or 6 at night to like 7 the next day. CDOT know that is when animals move and feed. RCR emphasizes moon light rides, mid-night rides, etc. This will only get worse as they want more and more and more riders show does wildlife stand a chance? Where do we draw a line? When is enough, enough?

So while trails and access is a vital component of our valley, they are just that a component not everything. I would ask the Forest Service and the City of Steamboat Springs to step back, slow this thing down and appreciate that an open and undisturbed landscape for the benefit of all wildlife is at least as great a component as a network of bike trails.

Thank-you

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