

Western Slope ATV Association

P O Box 4283

Grand Junction, CO 81502

USDA Forest Service
Rocky Mountain Region
740 Simms St
Golden CO 80401

May 26, 2011

Re: Buford/Newcastle Road (Gravel Road) closure to ATVs

Dear Sir/Madam:

We commented on the issue of closing the Buford/Newcastle Road to ATVs when the WR Travel Plan first announced it. You have made an error by ignoring our comment and therefore we are now appealing this decision.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 2145.14, I appeal the Record of Decision (ROD) of the designated road and trails system, allowable uses on these routes, and winter travel motorized uses by area or designated routes on the White River National Forest (WRNF) to comply with the Travel Management Rule (36 CFR Parts 212, 251, 261, and 295 "Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use", Federal Register 2005: 70 FR 68264) and White River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). The management options selected in that decision replace the existing travel plan and map (1985).

The White River National Forest travel planning effort was initiated in response to a demonstrated need outlined in the 1997 analysis of the management situation (AMS), and public interest during the forest planning process. The draft forest plan, released for public comment in August 1999, contained a detailed travel management plan. This outdated analysis does not now appropriately represent the modern day travel and use of the area to off-road vehicles. I remind you that a similar attempt was made in 1999, but was unsuccessful.

The common use area of full size vehicles and off-road vehicles has in the past been an amenable situation since long before the travel planning effort in 1997. Collisions between the two forms of travel have not represented a problem to date. The roads are sufficient in width to accommodate two large vehicles, so the continued use by vehicles and off-road vehicles on the subject road should not be a dilemma. Safety should not be used as a concern in the closing of the road. Responsible off-road vehicles adhere to strict driving requirements assigned to all vehicles while using the subject road.

A precedent has already been set by the Grand Mesa Uncompahgre & Gunnison National Forest by allowing full size vehicles and ATVs to share Forest Road 121 on Grand Mesa for many years with absolutely no safety issues. Two more are Forest Road 402, Divide Road, in the Uncompahgre N F and Forest Road 265 beginning in the Grand Mesa N F and ending in the Gunnison N F. These Roads are all of the same classification as the Buford Newcastle Road and go for similar distances in miles or more. On FR 265 ATVs not only share the road with recreational traffic but with gas field traffic of all sizes and there have been NO SAFETY ISSUES.

The integration of all users on the subject road has been a successful plan to the present and should continue to allow all users to avail the use of the subject road. Please correct your error and allow the combined safe travel of all to continue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Chapel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steve Chapel,
President, WSATVA