

From: Clif Koontz <cliftonkoontz@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, August 1, 2016 12:35 AM
To: Clif Koontz
Subject: Abajo, La Sal, & Manti mountains long-term planning / Bears Ears update

The future of southeast Utah's mountain ranges will be planned over the next few years.

OHV trails will be either added or subtracted, based on this revision of the Forest Plan for Manti-La Sal National Forest. Even before the plan is approved, the draft will tend to solidify, so the best window of influence is early... like now.

Here are four ways to participate:

1. Attend the "introductory" open house in Blanding (August 4th), Monticello (August 5th), or Moab (August 6th):
[see USFS email below this message]

2. Attend the "assessment" open house in Price (September 6th), Castle Dale (September 7th), Moab (September 13th), Monticello (September 14th), Blanding (September 15th), or Manti (September 21st):

[Forest Plan Revision](#)

3. Ask questions that the USFS will respond to online:

[Forest Plan Question and Answer form](#)

4. Respond to this USFS survey:

[Forest Plan Revision Public Survey](#)

The first two ways (attending meetings) offer a chance to develop a rapport with USFS planners, to ask questions about the planning process or current Forest Plan, and to express your interests/concerns or ideas for future Forest Plan.

The second two ways (submitting questions or survey responses) offer an early chance to comment on record. You can probably submit them in person at the meetings, or you can definitely email them to mlnfplanrevision@fs.fed.us, or you can mail them to the headquarters of Manti-La Sal National Forest at 599 West Price River Drive, Price, UT 84501.

Apparently, during the assessment stage, your comments will be viewed in terms of the following fifteen topics:

Forest Plan Revision - Phase 1: The Assessment

These topics may sound rather generalized, but they will affect aspects of the Forest Plan like Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classification (i.e. whether or not an area is suitable for motorized recreation), which will affect the subsequent Travel Plan that defines what routes you can ride (i.e. Will your favorite trail be closed, or will a new trail be constructed?).

Therefore it's not too early to get specific. Starting broadly, OHV riders seek diverse recreation opportunities, including loops of motorized singletrack, ATV trail, and 4WD roads. Likewise, local communities seek diverse recreation opportunities for a stable base of tourism.

In the Abajo Mountains, where a decent network of motorized singletrack and ATV trails is already in place, a few more connector trails would make the existing network more effective. Connectivity could be improved for trails that currently dead end, or that terminate at graded or paved roads. Adding a few trails would not only satisfy trail users, but it would reduce social conflicts by reducing OHV use of the graded or paved roads, and it would reduce natural-resource impacts by reducing the off-route travel that's associated with poor connectivity.

In the La Sal Mountains, current trail opportunities are slim. A few 4WD trails are in lower Brumley and Dorry canyons, but they're relatively hot and rocky. An ATV loop (Trail 17) goes from lower Twomile Canyon to Hideout Mesa, but it's a long ways from Moab. Small ATV and motorcycle loops (Trail 16 and Trust Lands Singletrack) go around upper Twomile Canyon, but they're confined to the SITLA property that's not even intended to be a "land of many uses." Likewise the Trust Lands ATV Loop goes around Taylor Flat, but it's short, and a long way from Moab. One way to make these SITLA trails more useful would be for new USFS trails to connect them with Moab. For example, new singletrack could loop around the base of South Mountain to reach Trust Lands Singletrack, and then new singletrack could follow Dark Canyon and Geyser Pass roads to return. Likewise, new ATV trail could go past Willow Basin to reach Trust Lands ATV Loop.

The Manti range boasts the Arapeen ATV trails, but even they could use a few connectors, and the motorized singletrack is few and far between. For these Ferron, Price, and Sanpete districts, you can get further details by joining the Castle Country OHV Association, the Sage Riders MC, or the Uinta Trail Council.

Of course we also recommend supporting Ride with Respect to ensure a future for OHV riding in the Abajo, La Sal, and Manti mountains.

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Regarding the proposed Bears Ears monument and Utah Public Lands Initiative, here's a personal account of the latest meeting, this one in Blanding last Wednesday. I had the pleasure of attending it with a half-dozen OHV advocates.

For the public hearing, the panelists were Senator Lee, Representative Bishop, Governor Herbert, Bruce Adams from San Juan County, Chester Johnson from the Aneth Chapter of the Navajo Nation, and Lewis Singer from the Blue Mountain Dine community organization. All of them spoke against the proposed national monument, and were quick to point out that monument supporters, out-of-state tribal leaders, and federal officials declined their invitation to attend.

For the subsequent town-hall meeting, every speaker from the audience opposed the proposed monument, and some of them opposed the Utah PLI as well. I got a chance to speak, and described Ride with Respect's many years of success in "protecting Bears Ears" through trail work that benefits all Americans. I thanked all of the panelists for their legislative efforts because, although the PLI is not great for OHV riders, it's fair. I concluded that this standard is all that the other stakeholders should expect, which alludes to the tyrannical position of groups seeking to vastly expand wilderness and its proxy designations.

Sure enough, rather than participating in the town-hall meeting or any democratic process, wilderness groups are putting all of their energy into smearing the PLI draft bill. Their half-truths and no-truths seem to be bought wholesale by most media outlets. By stoking the flames of prejudice against rural people, wilderness groups are portraying the PLI as a dirty stick in the mud rather than the locally-grown olive branch that it is. Never mind that the PLI would be, by far, the largest conservation gain in Utah's history. Wilderness groups won't bother with democracy so long as they believe that our president, who never campaigned on mega-monuments, will override the legislative process. Monument threats spawned the PLI, but monument assurances will wind up strangling the PLI if the White House and Congress don't recognize that wilderness groups have been negotiating in bad faith for years.

I'll spare you the details, but if you really want to know what's killing common-sense conservation, there are several references to the Bears Ears charade here:

[ADVOCACY: Western nonprofit is changing the face of BLM](#)

In contrast, a grassroots effort to shed light on the issue is available here:

[Save The Bears Ears](#)

After clicking on "how to help," you'll see links for making a donation, signing a petition, and writing your elected officials. Writing might take a while, but signing a petition and making a donation will only take a minute! Also, "like" them on Facebook:

[Protect The Bears Ears](#)

In recent past, monument threats have been overcome by balanced legislation such as the Sawtooth National Recreation Area and Jerry Peak Wilderness Additions Act in Idaho, and it can happen in Utah. Please spread the word. Thank you for helping to give responsible recreation a fighting chance.

Executive Director
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USFS email –
Good Morning,

The Manti-La Sal National Forest has rescheduled its Forest Plan Revision open houses in Blanding, Monticello, and Moab. The meetings will occur as follows:

- **Blanding** – Thursday August 04, 2016 from 5 to 7:00 p.m. at the Blanding City Library (25 W. 300 S.)
- **Monticello** – Friday August 05, 2016 from 5 to 7:00 p.m. at the Canyon Country Discovery Center (1117 N. Main St.)
- **Moab** – Saturday, August 06, 2016 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Grand Center (182 N. 500 W.)

Attendees can show up at any point during the open house hours. Forest Service representatives will be on-site to answer your Forest Planning questions and gather information about how you use the Forest and your thoughts concerning the future of the Manti-La Sal National Forest.

About Forest Plan Revision

Forest Plans provide strategic guidance for how Forests are managed to allow for multiple uses. Created in 1986, the current Manti-La Sal National Forest Plan is 30-years-old and needs to be updated to account for evolving Forest uses and needs. The Revision process is expected to last four years, starting in 2016 with an Assessment and concluding in 2019 with Implementation & Monitoring.

To learn more about the Manti-La Sal National Forest Plan Revision and how you can participate in the process, visit our website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/mantilasal/landmanagement/planning>. You can also email us at mlnfplanrevision@fs.fed.us or contact us via phone at 435-636-3508.



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