Comments Comment Number: 1 Comment Title: Protect Nonmotorized Silverton Trails Comment: Hello,
My name is Averill Doering and I have been a resident of the Ridgway/Ouray/Silverton area for about six years.  During this short time I have observed a noticable uptick in the use of motorized OHVs throughout the backcountry roads along the 550 mountain corridor.  While this increased use has brought tourism dollars to the local community, there is no doubt it comes along with costs as well.  We are seeing more traffic and erosion on jeep roads and increased dust during dry months.

As the BLM considers expansion of motorized use in the Minnie Gulch area and beyond, I ask that all decisions be based on sound science which assesses the long term and landscape level impacts of such decisions.  While I am not a wildlife biologist, I am an avid backcountry skier and hiker.  I honor the mountains as I travel through them and am deeply grateful for the personally restorative effects of untrammeled wild lands.

When I'm out, I often sight animals, and in these moments, I consciously stop, stay quiet and let them pass at a relaxed pace.  When motorized users, often traveling at higher speeds over longer distances have similar encounters with wildlife, I have observed that the animals are more disturbed and often flee the scene in a frightful run.  This seems disrespectful to the wildlife, wasting valuable food calories, driving them further out of viable habitat, and effectively shrinking the spaces where they feel safe to live, graze and reproduce.

I trust you will use the best available science and qualitative information to make sound management decisions that will have lasting positive effects on our delicate alpine landscapes and their residents.  I thank you for your thoughfulness and appreciate all that you do to help serve as a guardian for our precious public lands.

Respectfully,

I strongly ask that the there be no further motorized trails in the Silverton/San Juans area. There are quite enough as it is for recreational use and once a pristine area/trail is turned to motorized use, its value to recreation and peace of mind is much diminished. There is valuable tourist time and resource in non-motorized areas in addition to existing motorized areas.
I live in the Ridgway area and host many visitors to the area