



File Code: 1950-1/2720

Date:

Dear Forest User:

The Parks Ranger District is seeking comments on a proposal to permit new outfitting/guiding operations in several areas on the District. The analysis area is the entire Parks Ranger District of the Medicine Bow – Routt National Forests. The District surrounds the town of Walden (and the area known as North Park) in north central Colorado and extends almost to Kremmling Colorado (or the Middle Park area) on the southern end.

The primary goal of this proposal is to provide the public quality recreation activities on the Parks Ranger District.

Scoping is an integral part of the environmental analysis process. The purpose of this public comment period is to identify issues and concerns related to the proposed action(s). In addition, scoping may identify additional information and management opportunities that may be incorporated into the proposed actions(s), as well as formulating alternatives to the proposed actions(s). The District Ranger has determined that the scoping period is the most effective timing for the 30-day comment period on the proposed actions (36 CFR 215.5(2)). This will be the only opportunity for the public to comment on this analysis before decisions on these projects are issued.

The opportunity to comment ends 30 days following the date of publication of the legal notice (§215.6(a)(2) in the *Jackson County Star*, the newspaper of record. Please address written comments to: Tina Lanier, Project Leader, P.O. Box 158, Walden, CO 80480. Telephone Number: (970) 723-8204. Fax Number: (970) 723-4610. E-mail Address: comments-rocky-mountain-medicine-bow-routt-parks@fs.fed.us. Please type “New Outfitter/Guide Proposal Comments” in the subject line. Acceptable formats for electronic comments are: rtf, pdf or word.)

Please include 1) name and address, 2) title of the proposed action, 3) specific substantive comments on the proposed action(s), along with supporting reasons that the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision.

Individuals and organization wishing to be eligible to appeal must provide the following:

- i. Name and address;
- ii. Title of the proposed action;
- iii. Specific substantive comments (§215.2) on the proposed action, along with supporting reasons that the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision;
- iv. Signature or other verification of identity upon request;



- v. Individual members of an organization must submit their own substantive comments to meet the requirement of appeal eligibility; comments received on behalf of an organization are considered as those of the organization only; and
- vi. Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours via telephone or in person.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In December 2003 the Parks Ranger District published a "Prospectus – An opportunity for Outfitting and Guiding Summer/Fall Seasons on the Parks Ranger District" and invited anyone interested to apply for these opportunities. Several proposals were received, and in April 2004, 25 successful proposals were chosen to go through the environmental analysis process (or NEPA) and then be issued special use permits. The following organizations have been chosen by the Forest Service to move forward through this process: Women's Wilderness Institute, Devil's Thumb Outfitters, Buffalo Creek Outfitters, Solid Rock Outdoor Ministries, Good Chance Guided Hunts, Red Feather Guides and Outfitters, PT Outfitters, and Coyote Creek Outfitters.

This proposed action is the start of the environmental analysis and decision-making process.

PROPOSED ACTION

The Parks District of the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests proposes to issue special use permits for 18 new outfitter/guide operations on the Park Ranger District. These operations would all take place during the summer or fall periods. Types of outfitting/guiding activities include: hunting and fishing, horseback rides, backpacking, and interpretive tours. This would include 7 new permits and one amendment to an existing permit. A brief summary of the proposed new outfitters by compartment and season (summer or fall) is contained in the tables and maps attached to this document.

Descriptions of the individual proposals can be found on the FS website <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/mbr/projects/specper/index.shtml> as well as individual outfitter proposal maps. This information can be found under the heading "New Outfitter/Guides Proposed on Park Ranger District".

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE ACTION

The **purpose** of the action is to provide a range of recreational opportunities to the public, through outfitter/guiding operations on the Parks Ranger District of the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests.

The action is **needed** to meet public needs expressed to outfitters and to the Forest Service, for additional recreational opportunities.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS AND DOCUMENTS

The Routt National Land and Resource Management Plan (1997 Revision) is an overall strategy designed to guide the management of the Forest. The intent of the direction in the Forest Plan is to manage National Forest System (NFS) lands for multiple uses. To accommodate multiple-use management, the Forest Plan contains direction for different Management Areas. Each Management Area has a different management emphasis wherein specific uses are favored over other uses. The proposed action falls under several types of management areas. These operations would be consistent with the Management Area directions and standards and guidelines contained in the Routt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

NATURE OF DECISIONS TO BE MADE

Specific decisions to be made regarding the analysis include:

- Should each proposed activity be permitted? Why or why not?
- Since there is a question about the Labor Day Weekend (whether it is Summer or Fall operating season), which of the proposed activities should be allowed to operate over Labor Day Weekend? Why or why not?
- Are there alternate route or camp relocations that should be considered? Why?
- Are there certain management requirements or stipulations that should be attached to certain permits? Why?

ANALYSIS SCHEDULE

The interdisciplinary team will prepare an environmental analysis (EA), to disclose a more detailed description of the proposed actions, as well as alternative methods for achieving the stated purpose. The EA will summarize the potential changes to the environment due to implementation of the alternatives. The Responsible Official will consider the environmental effects of implementing the proposed actions, as well as the No Action alternative and any other alternatives described in the EA, and determine whether or not the proposed actions will take place. Both the EA and decision documents will be posted on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest website.

If a decision is made to implement these projects, it is anticipated that potential outfitting/guiding operations could begin as early as June 2005. The Parks District Ranger will be the Responsible Official for these proposals.

To ensure consideration in this process, comments on the proposed actions to be analyzed and documented in an Environmental Analysis must be submitted within 30 days following the date of publication of the legal notice in the *Jackson County Star* (see instructions for submitting comments above).

Thank you for your interest in your National Forest!

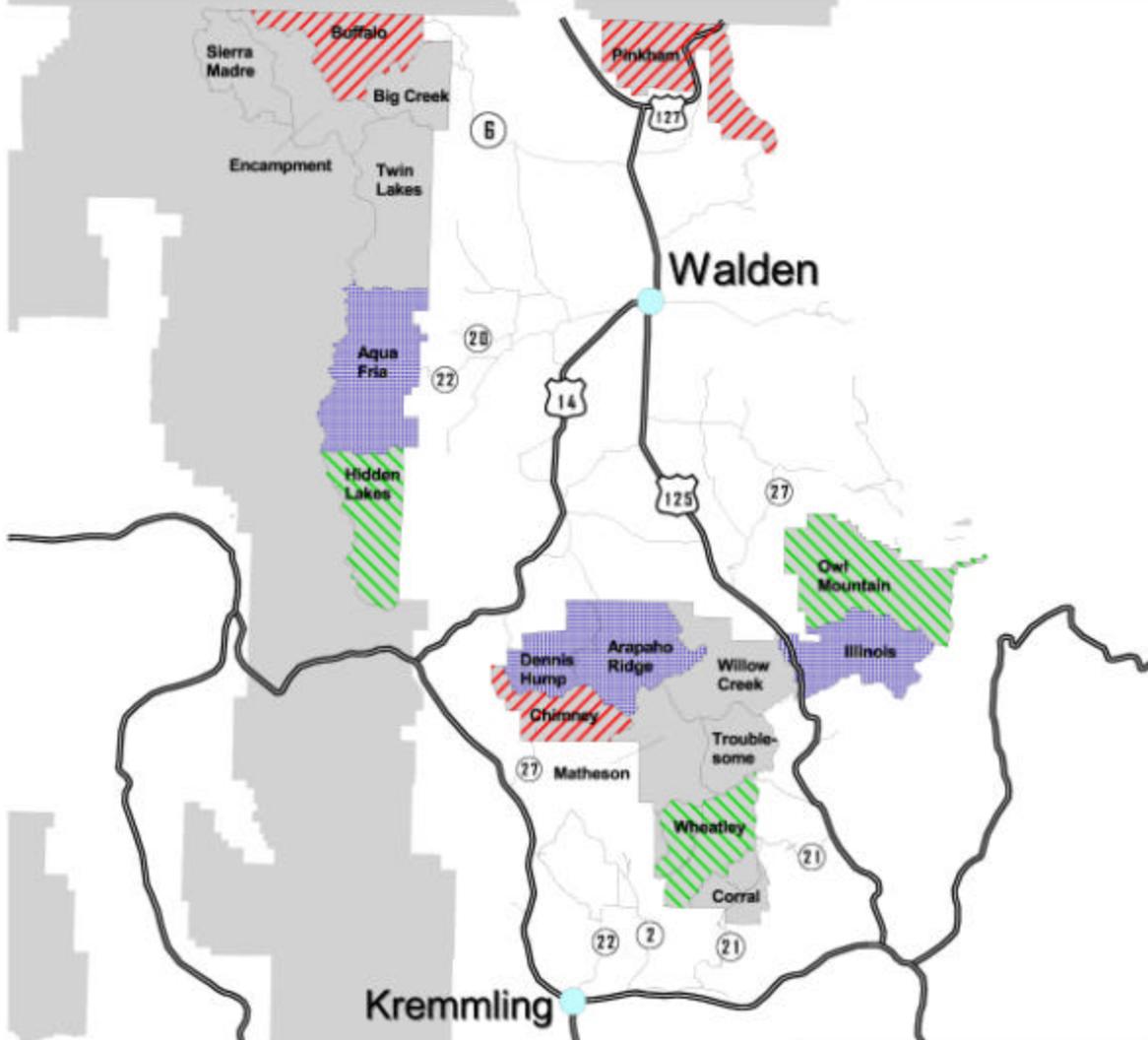
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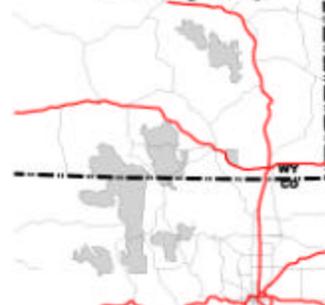
DIANN RITSCHARD
Acting Parks District Ranger

Encl (3)

Capacity Compartments for Outfitter/Guides

USDA Forest Service
Medicine Bow - Routt National Forests
Parks Ranger District



<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Capacity Compartments with New Fall Outfitter Proposed  Capacity Compartments with New Summer Outfitter Proposed  Capacity Compartments with New Summer & Fall Outfitter Proposed 	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Legend</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Capacity Compartments with No New Outfitter Proposed  Other National Forest Lands 	<div style="text-align: center;">    Interstate  Highway  County Road </div>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Vicinity Map</h3> 
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Map created by T.Lanier
October 2004

Attachment 2
New Proposed Outfitter/Guides for Summer Season
Parks Ranger District
 Approximately 6/1 – 9/5
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Compartment	Type of Activity Offered	Exceptions or Stipulations to Offering	Successful Proponent	Service Days	Activity / Comments
Aqua Fria	Youth outings/ progressive overnight hikes Guided backpacking & hiking Day use trail rides Progressive overnight trail rides	No use of Rainbow Lakes Trail No motorized/mechanized travel in Mount Zirkel Wilderness	Women's Wilderness Institute	70	Guided backpacking & hiking
Arapaho	Youth outings/ progressive overnight hikes Guided backpacking & hiking Day use trail rides Progressive overnight trail rides Guided Fishing (to lakes without road access)	<u>Caution</u> – timber sales could impact the Grassy Run side in the next few years	Devil's Thumb	330	Day use trail rides Progressive overnight trail rides Guided Fishing (to lakes without road access) <i>Weekdays only, no holidays</i>
			Buffalo Creek	70	Day use trail rides Progressive overnight trail rides Guided Fishing (to lakes without road access) <i>Weekends & Holidays only</i>
Dennis Hump	Interpretive Tours Youth outings/ progressive overnight hikes Day use trail rides	Day Use only, Week Days only for most activities	Buffalo Creek	20	Interpretive Tours
Hidden Lakes	Guided Fishing (north of Road 60) Youth outings/ progressive overnight hikes Mountain Bike Tours	Day Use, Non-Wilderness only for most activities	Buffalo Creek	30	Guided Fishing (north of Road 60)

New Proposed Outfitter/Guides for Summer Season

Parks Ranger District

Approximately 6/1 – 9/5

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Compartment	Type of Activity Offered	Exceptions or Stipulations to Offering	Successful Proponent	Service Days	Activity / Comments
Illinois	Mountain Bike Tours Guided backpacking & hiking		Solid Rock Outdoor	144	Guided backpacking & hiking
Owl Mountain	Interpretive Tour (Teller City/Mining)	No Wilderness	Buffalo Creek	30	Interpretive Tour (Teller City/Mining)
Wheatley	Progressive overnight trail rides Day use trail rides	Access and use in South and West sides only (Currently no public access on FDR 105)	Devil's Thumb	70	Progressive overnight trail rides Day use trail rides

Attachment 3

Compartment	Type of Activity Offered	Exceptions or Stipulations to Offering	Successful Proponent	Service Days	Activity / Comments
Aqua Fria	Guided Hunts / Game Packing		Devil's Thumb	130	Guided Hunts / Game Packing
Arapaho	Guided Hunts / Game Packing	<u>Caution</u> – timber sales could impact the Grassy Run side in the next few years	Good Chance	300	Guided Hunts / Game Packing
Buffalo	Guided Hunts / Game Packing	Maybe limited use at Buffalo & Beaver Creek Trailheads	Red Feather	15	Guided Hunts / Game Packing <i>Moose Hunts only</i>
Chimney Rock	Guided Hunts / Game Packing	Day Use Only	PT Outfitters	50	Guided Hunts / Game Packing <i>Archery, Muzzleloader & 1st Rifle seasons only</i>
			Buffalo Creek	20	Guided Hunts / Game Packing, 2-4 th seasons only
Dennis Hump	Guided Hunts / Game Packing	Day Use Only	Coyote Creek	180	Guided Hunts / Game Packing
			Buffalo Creek	20	Guided Hunts / Game Packing <i>Moose hunts only</i>
Illinois	Guided Hunts / Game Packing	Day Use Only	Red Feather	25	Guided Hunts / Game Packing <i>Moose Hunts only</i>
			Buffalo Creek	20	Guided Hunts / Game Packing <i>No Moose Hunts</i>
Pinkham	Guided Hunts / Game Packing		Red Feather	15	Guided Hunts / Game Packing <i>Moose Hunts only</i>