

Brian Lieberman, Open Space and Trails Manager
OSRAC Board Members
Eagle Town Council
1050 Chambers Ave
Eagle, CO 81631



September 15, 2023

Dear Brian, OSRAC Board, Eagle Town Council

During the September 5th OSRAC meeting we were very disappointed when the OSRAC Board seemed to decide not to take the recommendation of ERO and have more discussion surrounding the management of the Haymaker Trail. We agree with ERO and Bill when he was citing that Haymaker, 2nd Gulch and E-Bikes as more complex issues that deserve more discussion and community engagement to come to true consensus decisions.

It wasn't clear at the meeting how this process was going to proceed so we wanted to express our concerns and make sure all the decision makers are aware of the following.

- HTC would be most supportive of the option to maintain the status quo management of Haymaker. Keep loops 1 & 2 open during the winter unless animals or kill are present. This has worked well in the past, is easy for the public to understand and is well complied with. Additionally, just last winter this is what OSRAC recommended and Town Council approved. Volunteer organizations brought together all stakeholders to launch the Respect the Wild educational campaign and the Town committed to supporting this effort. After just 2 short months there was measurable improvement. This initiative needs more time to be fully impactful.
- If an adaptive closure is going to be pursued, the default status should be open and changed to closed when specific, defined circumstances warrant a closure.
- The impact maps ERO put together clearly show the Haymeadow development will impact the habitat this closure is trying to protect. As the development grows, impact will grow. If the 2nd loop closure takes place now it is our belief that we will never get that access back regardless of habitat destruction from the development.
- The Town has consistently said they want to be consistent with adjacent land managers. The BLM land that is directly adjacent to the Haymaker trail is open to foot and horse traffic in the winter. It makes it very confusing for trail users and compliance. Closing Haymaker will only exacerbate this issue.
- If the Haymaker trail is closed there is a very strong likelihood of violations of other trail closures increasing. Violations in other areas would ultimately spread out and increase human impact rather than reducing it.

- The numbers CPW publishes show that Elk herds E16 & E12 and Deer herds D14 & D8 are all within their management objectives yet they keep pushing for additional closures. It would be beneficial for the Town and OSRAC to pursue having meaningful conversations with CPW about things that could really benefit these herds if they are concerned about their survival. Discussions could include reducing hunting pressure, reducing predator pressures, reducing animal/auto collisions, potentially not introducing wolves into an area if the herds are already stressed and habitat improvement projects. We firmly believe that if CPW is concerned about these herds (that take up a massive geographic area) the 1.5 miles of Haymaker we have been discussing for years now is not the problem or the solution.
- When Haymaker was built it was always envisioned as a place for Eagle to recreate year round. When the request came to close the 3rd loop and Extra Credit, we happily agreed. When the request came for a 2 week longer closure every year, regardless of conditions, we reluctantly agreed attempting to operate in good faith and the spirit of compromise. Asking to close the trail completely or have an adaptive closure that has the default status as closed is not reasonable for trail users.

Thank you for your time and considering our position. We believe an appropriate compromise has already been reached a strong educational campaign is in place. Please help us preserve access to Haymaker in the winter.

Sincerely,

Robert Tadlock, President
Charlie Brown, Vice President
Laura Turitz, Treasurer
Nicky Asselin, Secretary

Hardscrabble Trails Coalition
www.hardscrabbletrailscoalition.org