

Frequently Asked Questions about the Draft Hermosa Creek Watershed Protection Act

Q: Is mountain biking still allowed in the Hermosa Creek Watershed under the draft bill?

A: Yes. The final recommendations of the workgroup, as reflected in the proposed legislation from Senator Bennet, will keep the vast majority of bike trails open in this area. Due to safety concerns and its low level of use, the Workgroup recommended the closure of Clear Creek Trail to bicycles and motorcycles. All other trails will remain open to biking including Hermosa Creek, Dutch Creek, Elbert Creek, Corral Draw, all of the Colorado Trail (including the Sliderock, Blackhawk, Rico-Silverton and Highline portions), Little Elk Creek, Jones Creek, Pinkerton-Flagstaff, and Goulding Creek. The basis of wilderness boundaries for the watershed reflect 2008 recommendations made to the Forest Service by Trails 2000 (a mountain bike and trails advocacy group), the Wilderness Society and San Juan Citizen's Alliance. The Workgroup closely adopted those compromise recommendations in its final report.

Q: Will the draft bill close any areas to motorcycles?

A: The Workgroup recommended closing Clear Creek trail to motorcycle use. All other trails currently open to motorcycle use in this area, including Hermosa Creek, Jones Creek, Dutch Creek, Pinkerton-Flagstaff and Corral Draw, will not see any change to their status under this bill.

Q: Is hunting and fishing still allowed under the draft bill?

A: Yes. All of the acreage in the bill will remain open to hunting and fishing.

Q: Is timber harvesting still allowed under the draft bill?

A: Timber harvesting is still allowed in roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ of the bill's acreage, provided it protects the integrity of the watershed.

Q: How does the draft bill respect Colorado water rights?

A: The draft bill uses the so called "Headwaters Language" originally used in the 1993 Colorado Wilderness Act. This language respects Colorado water law and tradition and does not allow for the creation of any new federal water rights.

Q: Is hardrock mining allowed under the draft bill?

A: In accordance with the Workgroup's recommendations, two areas known to contain high quality mineral reserves would remain eligible for future mining activities under the bill.

Q: Are firefighters allowed into the area to fight a wildfire under the bill?

A: Yes the bill allows the Forest Service to carry out activities in the area to control and prevent fire as well as address insect and invasive species issues.