

-----SAMPLE CDTA COMMENT LETTER-----

July 9, 2004

Melissa Martin
Project Leader
Medicine Bow Routt National Forest
Laramie Ranger District Office
2468 Jackson Street
Laramie, WY 82070

RE: CDNST Environmental Assessment

Dear Ms. Martin:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Medicine Bow Routt National Forest Environmental Assessment for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST). We are excited to see all of the hard work the staff of the Parks and Sulpher Ranger Districts have put into this EA and are happy to assist you with this process and help you strive for the highest quality National Scenic Trail possible.

Approximately 135 miles of the CDNST occur in the Medicine Bow Routt National Forest. National Scenic Trails are created to conserve the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural and cultural qualities of the area. In addition, these trails are designed for recreation and the enjoyment of these very special places.

Please consider the following general comments when planning and constructing the CDNST:

1. It is the intention of Congress for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail to be a primitive and challenging non-motorized trail traversing the Continental Divide from Canada to Mexico.
2. New CDNST construction should link to existing non-motorized segments of trail, or a plan should be in place to address the motorized uses on either end in the near future in order to meet the intent of the CDNST as a non-motorized trail.
3. To avoid building trail that may not fit National Scenic Trail standards, and to improve the overall planning of the CDNST, we suggest all agencies:
 - Review the existing or proposed CDNST route in the adjacent jurisdictions to assure it meets National Scenic Trail standards prior to connecting with them.
 - Establish CDNST “control points” where the Trail must pass through and analyze route opportunities between these points that fit National Scenic Trail standards.
4. All agencies should plan and construct the CDNST to include the following characteristics:
 - Built to a non-motorized standard – Fully accessible for foot and equestrian use. Portions accessible for mountain bikes where appropriate.
 - Challenging – Requiring a need for self-reliance and backcountry skills.

- Located through the most primitive, diverse and undeveloped landscapes on or near the Continental Divide.
- Accesses or is routed near nationally significant scenic, historic, cultural and natural features.
- Allows for an opportunity to view dramatic or unique scenery.
- Allows for an opportunity to view wildlife.
- Provides appropriate access to water sources.
- Developed to the most simple, yet high quality standard.

Please consider the following specific comments or questions relative to the Medicine Bow Routt National Forest's Environmental Assessment for the CDNST:

1. CDTA would like to more fully engage the forest in developing a process (action plan) assigning roles and responsibilities to determine the route through non-federal land between FR 104 and Muddy Pass. As trail planning and construction efforts continue to focus on reaching these two areas, CDTA feels these two areas should be used as control points when researching our opportunities through the non-federal land between them.
2. Equestrians and hikers forced on to roads and motorized trails can be extremely dangerous. For the reason and for the reasons listed below, CDTA would encourage the Medicine Bow Routt National Forest to rank all planning segments as a top priority.
 - In addition, non-motorized trail which links to motorized trail creates a host of problems including but not limited to:
 - Increases in enforcement costs
 - Increases in resource damage due to inconsistent trail design
 - Increases in user conflict
 - Insufficient use of limited funds and resources to build segments that will need to be moved in the future to meet National Scenic Trail standards
3. CDTA is eager to work with the Medicine Bow Routt to complete the 2008 Strategic Completion Plan. This work plan lines out planning and construction projects per fiscal year in an effort to discover out-year project needs (both human and fiscal)
4. CDTA is eager to share our resources (volunteer scouts, membership relations, fundraising abilities, volunteer labor, etc.) to work with the Forest to determine the ultimate location for a non-motorized CDNST corridor through the Medicine Bow Routt National Forest and assist in its implementation.

We have every confidence in the Forest's ability to make the best decisions based on the many needs of the users of our public lands.

The CDTA was formed in 1995 to work with the federal land management agencies in the completion, management and protection of the CDT. The CDTA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with 2,600 members nationwide.

In April 1999, the CDTA was designated as the leading partner in the completion of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail by the heads of the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management during a Memorandum of Understanding signing in Washington, D.C. To date, the CDTA has been successful in coordinating over \$2.4 million in volunteer labor, improving and completing hundreds of miles of the CDT, building positive relationships with the federal land managers and local clubs,

organizing the first border-to-border surveys of the Trail, implementing an Adopt-A-Trail program and convincing Congress to appropriate over \$6 million for the CDT in the Forest Service budget.

Thank you again for the opportunity to express our concerns regarding this project. We request to remain on the mailing list for further opportunity for involvement. If you have question about our letter, please contact us or CDTA Field Operations Coordinator, Bryan Martin.

Most sincerely,

Paula Ward
Co-Executive Director

Bruce Ward
Co-Executive Director

Cc: Greg Warren, U.S. Forest Service