

Trail 715 Connection

Finding of Applicability and No Extraordinary Circumstance

USDA Forest Service
Pikes Peak Ranger District
Colorado Springs, Colorado
El Paso County

Responsible Official:
Carl Bauer
District Ranger

Documentation Informing the FANEC

This Finding of Applicability and No Extraordinary Circumstance incorporates the specialist reviews in ELMS project #135023 and relies on documentation in the associated project record.

Proposed Action

The Forest Service has received a proposal for a new trail segment connecting the new municipal trail southwest of Monument, CO to NFST 715. The proposed non-motorized trail would be approximately one mile long. Starting on NFST 715, the connector trail would cross North Beaver Creek, follow an old non-system trail along the south side of the creek ravine, and then gain elevation to climb out of the ravine, turn south to switchback down the eastern slope of the hillside, and connect with the municipal trail near the water tower on the west side of the Forest Lakes subdivision.

At the top of the trail, where it diverges from NFST 715, the trail will follow a user-created route and require a hardened water crossing. Utilizing and improving the existing non-system trail alignment and water crossing is preferred to cutting new trails in the steep terrain in order to minimize negative impacts to soil and water resources. Although increasing the number of stream crossings is not typically preferred, other potential alignments would require substantially more ground disturbance, potentially causing subsequent soil loss, erosion, and unsustainability. Additionally, systemizing the new route will likely increase the frequency and use in the area, which would increase the likelihood that the decommissioned non-system stream crossings or routes would be illegally reopened. This would have negative effects to soil and water resources.

As part of the proposed action, the existing non-system route (which is the proposed new trail) would be improved to ensure sustainable drainage and to minimize soil erosion. The stream crossing would also require a hardened low water crossing with rocks and/or a puncheon crossing. New trail signings would be added, specifically at the terminus points of the new trail and at the stream crossing. All improvement and construction materials shall be approved by the USFS before implementation.

The proposed trail would be constructed according to US Forest Service trail design standards.

Applicable Categorical Exclusion(s)

I **certify** that this action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement because it fits the following category or categories:

USDA-26d-USFS

Construction and reconstruction of trails.

Finding of No Extraordinary Circumstances

The environmental review and supporting proposal record, as informed by the interdisciplinary review, supports my finding that no extraordinary circumstances exist. I considered the following resource(s) in my review.

Resource(s)

Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat or species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat

Flood plains, wetlands, or other such sensitive areas

Findings Required by Other Laws

I find this proposal in compliance with the following laws, regulations, and policy as described in ELMS and the proposal record.

National Forest Management Act
Endangered Species Act
Forest Service Manual 2670 - Sensitive Species
National Historic Preservation Act
Clean Water Act

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Responsible Official Signature

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