

## Close Hogbacks to off-road vehicles

Publish Date: 2/12/2008

To the editor:

When the city acquired the hogbacks, the Cañon City Council automatically became land managers. Most land management agencies strive to either maintain the land in its present condition or improve the land. Past city councils have failed miserably on both counts. The councils — and there have been several — decided to ignore the area and do nothing. This has been a defector management decision to allow use that has been destroying the area.

The litany of complaints over the years have been ignored. As hikers who have enjoyed the area for many years, it has been a source of continual frustration. Literally, day by day, there have been more and more areas denuded by vehicular traffic. Day by day, there have been more unsightly scars that created more and more erosion. Day by day, there have been fewer rabbits, fewer quail and fewer deer. Hills are now completely denuded of vegetation. The city has been proud to explain that several detention structures have been built to control the erosion. But they conveniently forgot to address the initial cause of all that erosion which is, of course, uncontrolled vehicular use. Unfortunately, this does little to decrease the damage of a variety of vehicles that tear up the soil, nor does it lessen the noise level of these vehicles.

I'm sure council members would like to reach a solution that would not only keep the vehicle users happy and the hikers and walkers, as well. This is like trying to mix oil and water. It simply will not work. Vehicle users frequently remind us that they have been there for a long time and have an established use. I would be quick to point out that hikers and walkers have also been enjoying the area for as long or longer than the vehicle users. Our recommendation? Close the area to off road vehicular traffic as soon as possible. This would allow time for proper planning to be done while giving mother nature a chance to start healing the terrible wounds that have been inflicted over the years.

Needless to say, we are delighted to see proper concern for the area finally being shown by the city.

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Cañon City