



Summit Fat Tire Society gears up

Wilderness, trail plans require a unified mountain biking voice

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SUMMIT COUNTY — After several years of near-hibernation, the Summit Fat Tire Society (SFTS) is waking up to a pair of proposals that could have an impact on mountain bikers.

At issue for cycling enthusiasts is a preliminary plan to add more congressionally designated wilderness in Summit County.

As it now stands, that proposal could mean the loss of several popular trails.

Wilderness advocates say they want to work with the mountain bike community to get support for their vision. Lisa Smith, of the Colorado Environmental Coalition, will attend a meeting of the SFTS Thursday at the Hobby Room of the Summit Senior and Community Center in Frisco to give an update on the wilderness plan.

The U.S. Forest Service is also consider a new plan for the Continental Divide Trail that could limit mountain bike use on some section of the trail locally. Those two factors, along with impending changes in national forest trail management, spurred Mike Zobbe to try and revive the SFTS.

The main goals of the meeting will be to let mountain bikers know how they can be involved in the organization.

Zobbe also want the biking community to develop a unified voice in land policy decisions.

The other main goal will be to identify as many as four trail projects that the SFTS can take on for next year, either in partnership with agencies or on its own, Zobbe said.

“There are things in the hidden gems wilderness proposal I can support,” Zobbe said.

“What I would have a problem with is a wilderness proposal that would cut out use on areas where mountain biking is allowed, and where it’s popular,” he said.

Zobbe said it might be possible for the Forest Service to protect some of the areas included in the draft citizen wilderness plan by other means, using protective land management designations while still allowing mountain bikes.

One area of particular concern to Zobbe is Wilder Gulch, near Copper Mountain, part of popular bike loop.

Other areas that could be affected by the wilderness proposal are in the backcountry around Breckenridge, as well as the Ptarmigan Trail.

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