

May 15, 2006

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Regional Forester Rick Cables  
USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region  
P.O. Box 25127  
Lakewood, CO 82225-0127

Dear Mr. Cables:

Good day, I am writing to you on behalf of PowdertothePeople.org, a Colorado-based nonprofit organization. For two years we have been working to educate the public on inequities of use on its public lands, most specifically on Richmond Ridge near Aspen.

We are asking to share equal motorized access on established winter roads in the 7.1 intermix area on Richmond Ridge. Currently the only permit holder is the Aspen Skiing Company for non-exclusive use. In effect, however, it is being treated as an exclusive permit. We feel that the White River National Forest (WRNF) is giving us the runaround in order to protect commercial interests over public rights.

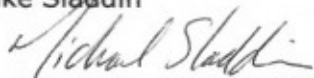
This situation came to a head two years ago when the permit holder began paying for WRNF enforcement patrol of the 7.1 intermix area. When we approached our local WRNF representatives, they recommended we form a group of responsible users and apply for a permit under the non commercial special use criteria. We did this, but our request was denied without clear explanation. It was suggested that we become more of an "educational outreach organization". We are now a recognized 501-C-3 and are actively promoting responsible backcountry use through our extensive website, special events and public forums at our website [www.powdertothepeople.org](http://www.powdertothepeople.org). We then applied for a third time this spring, and met with Area District Ranger Bill Westbrook and a couple of other handpicked WRNF representatives. We were given a verbal denial, and told we would need to wait 30 days for the official written denial. We are now well beyond the 30 day period and have not received a thing.

Through all what appears to us to have been "smoke and mirrors" we were asked to wait patiently for the WRNF Travel Management Plan, delayed in its release by the National Travel Management Plan. This also appears to have been a stall tactic, as neither the national Travel Plan nor the WRNF Travel Plan would preclude shared use in the 7.1 intermix area.

As you can see, we have been stymied as to how to apply for any sort of institutional permit. We are formally requesting any and all written procedures, regulations and protocols for permitting institutional and/or commercial uses of public lands, particularly as it concerns 7.1 intermix areas. We need to understand the criteria utilized in making these forest-related decisions, who makes these decisions and what the appeal process is. We are also interested to know what happens now that the WRNF has exceeded the 30-day period in which to issue a written denial.

Regards,

Mike Sladdin



President -PowdertothePeople.org

Cc: Editors Aspen Daily News, Aspen Times, Snowmass Sun, Maribeth Gustafson, and John Salazar