

# LETTERS

2-20-14

Five Year ANNIVERSARY

## It's time to fight back against federal agencies

This land is your land, this land is my land. Yet somehow we are locked out of more of it every day. Thank you, Brandon Siegfried, for showing us we actually can fight back.

I grew up in Paonia and left at 17 when I joined the Army. Coming back home every few years, I discovered the Jeep roads we traveled on had become ATV roads. Time to buy an ATV so I could still hunt. I retired two years ago and moved back for good.

Those ATV roads? Many are now closed by the Forest Service or BLM. Turns out they were never roads, despite the sawmill and cabin that sat at the end of the road, or the ditch rider's cabin. Access roads through BLM to the West Elk Wilderness Area were closed this fall. So, by the erection of a gate and placement of a lock, the size of the wilderness area has greatly increased.

While it is imperative we have wilderness areas, they are established by law, not by the whim of a federal agency. When I joined the Army, we had 25 wilderness areas in Colorado; we now have 40. Now older folks, handicapped folks and people who can't afford horses are locked out of more and more of "our land."

Where will this stop? When we are all limited to reservations called "towns" or "cities"? Strangely, it seems those who want access limited are very seldom the folks who actually spend time on the land.

I'm with Siegfried. It's time to push back. We should have the say about which roads are closed, not the feds.

Who but a special interest group would call a road closed to everyone else an open road? Thanks, BLM, you make it easy to make my point.

**JOHN TAYLOR**  
*Grand Junction*

### Antiquated RS 2477 law simply raises dust, noise, pollution

It is disheartening to see the RS 2477 issue being thrown about again and especially annoying to see it getting space on Page One, above the fold. Most of these routes are not "historical" in any sense other than the fact that at one

time a uranium prospector drove his Jeep down a canyon or a cowboy herded a few cattle through pristine plateau country and left an impacted trail.

Why can't Brandon Siegfried and his ilk just be honest about their intentions and say that, despite the fact that thousands of miles of motor vehicle trails are already available on public lands, they would rather not walk anywhere if they can ride instead? It is a matter of convenience, not a "crisis situation."

The antiquated RS 2477 statute is just another excuse to raise more dust, more noise, more pollution and more hell in general on our public lands. If we truly want to reduce our carbon emissions, tackle the inversion layer problem and avoid having to deal with federal clean-air regulations being imposed upon us, we can start by reducing motorized travel, not encouraging it.

**GREG GNESIOS**  
*Grand Junction*

### Siegfried, Martin merit praise for championing local control

First of all, I would like to start by thanking the editors of The Daily Sentinel for bringing the BLM land grab back into the news. As it gets closer to the elusive deadline for closing 67 percent of our public access to our public lands, it is important for this discussion to begin again.

My congratulations to Brandon Siegfried and John Martin for championing the real issue surrounding these lands: local control. The control of public lands, their access and development should be the responsibility of the state and local governments, not the federal government.

All the users of these public lands need to get behind Siegfried and Martin as a coalition to protect our rights to our public lands. If you will take a little



time to research other states that have already experienced the government taking total control of our lands, you will find that this is solely a political attack on our rights as U.S. citizens and the rights of states. The people of Colorado, through their respective counties, should be taking the lead on how our public lands will be used and developed. This is what RS 2477 allows and supports.

RS 2477 is the law of the land and must not be ignored by the government. The majority of our economic structure in this region is based in recreation and development. Everyone has a stake in making sure his or her public lands are not impacted by a politically motivated over-zealous public agency trying to take control of our public lands.

My one criticism of the article is the reference to RS 2477 as apparently some antiquated law that is "almost a century and a half old" that they are "reaching back to" in order to stop this land grab. Our entire country is based on a Constitution that is well over a century and a half old. It is still the law of the land.

**JAMES O'MALLEY**  
*Grand Junction*

### Those complaining about air must not be driving vehicles

I guess all the folks complaining about the nasty air in the valley either ride bikes or skateboards, walk or roller skate to work and the movies or wherever they go. They must power and heat their homes by solar or wind.

The people who had their pictures taken at a producing well site with respirators on should have to prove they had to wear them. I've been on many well pads and didn't have to have anything like that on.

**STEVE THOMAS**  
*Montrose*