

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-5000

January 31, 2023

Honorable Charles F. "Chuck" Sams III
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Director Charles F. "Chuck" Sams III:

As the solely elected Representative for the state of Wyoming, I am writing to express my strong support for the Southwest Wyoming Off-Road Trails (SWOT) project's request to allow street-legal off-road vehicles (ORVs) with valid State Trails program decals to use 11.5 miles of Chicken Creek Road from the north and south to access the Fossil Butte National Monument (FBNM) visitor center.

Since 2020, SWOT has been developing a motorized trail system with the goal of linking rural communities with Wyoming's natural beauty while also attracting thousands of new residents and tourists to the region. The system plans to connect Evanston, Bridger Valley, and Kemmerer with national forests and historic sites that possess scenic and underutilized routes of travel. A motorized trail system would provide visitors with the opportunity to take in the sites of Wyoming's magnificent landscape including its snow-capped mountains, rolling sagebrush deserts, and fertile green valleys.

SWOT hopes to also allow visitors to access and enjoy historic sites, such as Piedmont Kilns, and natural wonders, including Fossil Butte. Currently, street legal ORVs that have valid license plates can access the monument through Chicken Creek Road. However, even with proper documentation, ORV's without valid plates are not able to access the monument. This puts the majority of ORV users from other states at a disadvantage considering that most states, with the exception of Wyoming and Utah, do not issue license plates to ORVs. Allowing ORV's with a decal and proper documentation to utilize this stretch of roadway will provide visitors from across the country access to this magnificent natural wonder.

SWOT's project will inevitably promote economic growth and increased connectivity throughout Southwest Wyoming. Tourism is already one of the largest industries in the state. According to the Wyoming Office of Tourism, direct travel-related employment totaled around 31,000 jobs in 2021, with an estimated \$243 million generated in revenue. These benefits are not exclusive to the state, as FBNM would likely see an increase of several thousand visitors every year. The surrounding local communities will also see the advantages as the attraction of thousands of new visitors will spur the growth of numerous businesses and industries within the region.

This trails system has become increasingly popular throughout the state as it has received support from the city of Kemmerer, the Bridger Valley Chamber of Commerce, the town of Mountain View, the Uinta County Sheriff's Office, the Uinta County Economic Development Commission, the Evanston-Mountain

View Forest Service Ranger District, the Fossil Basin Promotional Board, the Evanston Chamber of Commerce, the city of Evanston, Rocky Mountain Power, and Southwest Manufacturing. I strongly encourage you to both thoroughly review and grant SWOT's request as this project's successful completion will be of major benefit to not only the state and people of Wyoming, but also the National Parks throughout the region that make America one of the most beautiful countries on Earth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Harriet H. Hageman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "H" and a long, sweeping underline.

Harriet Hageman
Member of Congress