



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
San Luis Valley Field Office  
1313 E. Highway 160  
Monte Vista, Colorado 81144

In Reply Refer To:  
8300 (COF03)

DATE: March 16, 2015

Subject: Public Comment Period Open for '12 Hours of Penitence' Mountain Bike Race Proposal.

Dear Reader,

The San Luis Valley Field Office is inviting public comment on a proposal to conduct a competitive mountain bike race at Penitente Canyon Special Recreation Management Area in October of this year.

The '12 Hours of Penitence' is a proposed competitive mountain bike race located primarily on BLM lands at Penitente Canyon Recreation Area near La Garita, CO. The proposed race consists of 150 riders, and lasts for 12 hours on 2 days; Saturday, Oct. 17 (Trials and Track Familiarization), and Sunday, Oct. 18, 2015 (Actual Race). The racecourse will use nearly all of Penitente Canyon's existing trail system and also calls for the construction of 2 new trails (approx. 3 miles in length combined) to connect to existing routes that will be used as part of the course. A third trail will connect from one of the BLM trails located on the BLM boundary through State lands to connect with Saguache County Road 40G, which would be authorized under a Right-Of-Way agreement with the State Land Board.

Components of the event include:

- Safety and Security – Numerous considerations and planning have gone into this critical aspect of the event's success, and include:
  - Approximately 2 BLM Rangers, 1 FS LEO, and other BLM staff on site,
  - Coordination with Saguache and Rio Grande County Sherriff's Departments and Colorado State Patrol,
  - Coordination with Rio Grande Hospital and San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center,
  - Coordination with area EMS providers,
  - 2 First Aid Stations on site with qualified EMT's/Nurses, etc.,
  - 1 Ambulance on site,
  - 1-2 Roving Medics on bicycle,
  - 1 San Luis Valley Interagency Incident Management Team, and
  - Numerous Volunteers.
- Spectators – Spectators will only park in designated areas and will disperse along the roads and trails, campground and day use areas to observe the race.
- Camping – Approximately 40% of all attendees are expected to stay in area motels. The other 60% are expected to camp. Camping will not occur on BLM lands at Penitente

Canyon, but will occur on private lands in La Garita and at the RV park at the La Garita Cash Store.

- Pit Crews – Pit Crews are the support personnel associated with individual and team racers competing in the event. The Penitente canyon campground will be closed prior to the event by special order and pit crews will be housed in the developed campsites.
- Start/Finish Line – The start and finish line will be located at the entrance to the developed campground.
- Sanitation – Numerous considerations and planning have gone into this critical aspect of the event's success, and include:
  - Toilets and Trash Containers –Recreation Area vault toilets and trash receptacles, plus port-a-potties and trash cans at all parking areas, pit crew areas, first aid tent sites, and at the start/finish line,
  - Recycling Trailer on site,
  - Volunteers continuously monitoring trash receptacles and picking up trash (the Adams State University cycling team and other volunteers will conduct a post-race cleanup along the entirety of the racecourse),
  - And BLM Recreation Staff removing trash as needed and maintaining BLM restrooms; before, during, and after the event.
- Parking – The majority of parking will be along Saguache County Road 38A. The county will close down a shoulder of the road for parallel parking. Other parking areas include the La Garita Trailhead, the Drinking Water well parking area, and the Iglesia de San Juan Trailhead. No non-official motorized use will be allowed past these locations and into the Recreation Area.
- Vendors – Several vendors will be associated with the event, but will not be located or operate on BLM lands. They will be associated with the Towns of Del Norte and La Garita.

The event proposal is included as an attachment to this document and explains other aspects of the event in further detail.

As a competitive event on BLM-managed lands, a Special Recreation Permit approved by the SLVFO Field Manager is required in order to conduct the event. Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) are authorizations that allow specific recreational uses of the public lands and related waters. SRP's are issued under the authority of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act and are issued as a means to:

- Support recreation planning goals to provide experience and beneficial outcomes to the public.
- Manage visitor use and reduce user conflicts.
- Protect natural and cultural resources.
- Provide for public health and safety.
- Educate and communicate with the public.
- Provide a mechanism to accommodate commercial recreation uses, and
- Obtain a fair value and return for the commercial use of public land.

The objective of the BLM recreation permitting system is to satisfy recreational demand within allowable use levels in an equitable, safe and enjoyable manner while minimizing adverse resource impacts and user conflicts. By issuing SRP's, BLM authorizes permittees the use of public lands and/or related waters for specific recreational purposes; a privilege that is subject to the terms, conditions, and stipulations of the permit, and the permit's approved operating plan.

Recreation permits are administered in a manner that is consistent with management objectives determined in Resource Management Plans, Recreation Area Management Plans, or in their absence, through recreation management objectives resulting from analysis of resources and visitor use in each area.

Public comments to the proposed '12 Hours of Penitence' mountain bike race at Penitente Canyon Special Recreation Management Area can be sent by e-mail to: [snoonan@blm.gov](mailto:snoonan@blm.gov), by phone at 719-849-3149, or by mail at BLM-SLVFO, 1313 E. Highway 160, Monte Vista, CO, 81144.

The public comment period will last from March 16, 2015 through March 30, 2015.

Sincerely,

/s/ Sean Noonan

Sean Noonan  
Outdoor Recreation Planner  
San Luis Valley Field Office

Cc: Andrew Archuleta, Field Manager

Attachment 1: '12 Hours of Penitence' Bike Race Proposal

Attachment 2: Map of Proposed New Trails

Attachment 3: Map of Race Logistics and Amenities

Attachment 4: Map of Racecourse