Forest Service campground would be a waste of money

We are writing concerning the proposed Jorgen's Hollow campground in the Sheyenne National Grasslands.

By Ron and Alicia Anderson, INFORUM

We feel it would be a waste. There is already a campground near the suggested location. The money would be better put to use improving the already existing trails leading into the grasslands from the Sheyenne Oaks camp that have been recently blocked. More importantly, reopen the gate into the grasslands just west of the camp, which is the most convenient place for campers to access that part of the area.

We have been told that the existing gate and trail were illegally made by a rancher a few years ago. If that is so, why is that trail clearly drawn on the trail maps available from the National Forest Service? We were also told the gate in that area has been locked due to 4-wheelers using it. A simple gate only big enough for horses and hikers would solve that problem. In reality, the erosion from 100 feet of horse trail near a gate on an existing trail would be insignificant considering more than 70,000 acres of land comprise the Sheyenne National Grasslands area in Ransom County!

Have more serious erosion problems been addressed in the SNG? The bridge at Iron Creek is nearly falling into the river due to natural erosion. This is of great risk to the public and should be fixed before spending more money on a campground.

It has been our experience that the local Forest Service has gone out of its way to restrict access in certain areas, citing erosion as an excuse to validate every decision. Common-sense solutions should be used regarding the public use of this wonderful area. We would suggest these issues be resolved before taking on more projects.

Quoting District Ranger Bryan Stotts from a recent Forum article: “It's public land, and the public will tell us what to do with it, ultimately.”

This is only possible if the public is aware of the plans. Where was the mandatory public opinion news release posted? Only after involved parties came forth was it made public in the local paper. The recent article was published Oct. 15 and included a short deadline for comments by Oct. 19.

The Andersons, frequent visitors to the Sheyenne National Grasslands,

are from Hallock, Minn.

Tags: Sheyenne national grasslands, opinion, letters, campgrounds