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Title:

Comments: Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests

Attn: Plan Revision Team

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Dear GMUG Planning Team,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit feedback on the Draft Revised Plan of the Grand Mesa Uncompahgre Gunnison National Forest. The Town of Ophir (Ophir) has been tracking the development of the plan at each stage and we have regular discussions during town meetings. I commend the Forest Service for the tremendous research, information-gathering effort and public input that has gone into this latest Plan. Ophir's identity and way of life are built upon the Forest Service lands that surround our town. I believe that our clean air, clean water and public health are directly linked to the protection of our public lands. The influence of the Forest Plan on the future of Ophir's health, well-being, economy, climate, and lifestyle cannot be understated.

I would like to provide my support for the comments and recommendations submitted by the Town of Ophir and Sheep Mountain Alliance. As a citizen passionately committed toward creating a healthy and sustainable environment, I'm very interested in supporting the Forest Service in creating a Forest Plan that provides wilderness protections and recognizes our forests as invaluable carbon sequestration resources in the race to counteract climate change, critical habitat for wildlife, and that our own personal health as a human species is directly interlinked to the protection of (not extraction of) our natural resources.

As a twenty year resident of the town of Ophir I am in favor of non-motorized recreation in the valley and I am strongly in favor of prohibiting recreational motorized over the snow travel east of the town of Ophir. High performance snowmobiles are incredibly loud and create compacted snow routes that change wildlife use in the area. The east end of the Ophir valley is also very avalanche prone and steep. Modern snow machines can now climb incredibly steep slopes and gain access to areas that in the past they could not. Over the past 5 years we have witnessed a dramatic increase in the amount of motorized over the snow traffic. This traffic is obnoxiously loud and disturbs our enjoyment of these lands.

Regarding the currently proposed plan, I do NOT support the Draft Revised Plan Preferred Alternative B as presented. Alternative D is preferred, however it still falls short in protecting our forests as valuable resources. My specific comments are:

? The substantial increase of suitable timber proposed in all alternatives is unacceptable. The GMUG National Forest is invaluable for conserving biological diversity, providing superb non-motorized recreation opportunity in nature, and sequestering carbon to help counteract climate change and should not be considered a resource for increased timber extraction.

? I would like to see the Winter ROS of the east side of the Ophir valley changed to Semi-Primitive Non-motorized. Motorized over snow travel disrupts wildlife in the east end of the Ophir valley and negatively impacts our enjoyment of these lands.

? I support the Wilderness Area recommendations in Alternative D and urge that those be included in the final plan.

? I strongly support the concept of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the revised forest plan and suggest that those be retained and strengthened with additional plan components.

? I support the 246,000 acres of Special Management Areas (SMAs) in Alternative D.

I support the CORE act.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be part of the GMUG planning process.

Kindly,