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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing to express my thoughts on the development of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison Forest plan. As a cattle owner and an avid recreation user, I have a vested interest in managing for sustainability. My family, Jacobs Family LLLP, owns land that borders the forest at the base of the Raggeds. Water is a limited resource. Our water rights originate on the forest. We need the plan to allow us to operate and maintain our infrastructure on the forest. We have rights from Drift Creek on the west side of CO 133. Long term we feel it would be desirable to improve the efficiency of the delivery of that water. We would like to see flexibility in the plan to allow for this work.

We work to keep noxious weeds at bay. We would like the plan to specifically address weed control. Weed seed is brought to our land via wind, water and big game. Grazing practices are desirable. We have found biological control effect although slow. When species will not be eaten and there is no biological control, spraying is necessary. Allowing weed to prevail is a waste of land and water. Uncontrolled invasive weeds take over landscapes. When weeds have been eradicate, replacing them with native grasses will be necessary to prevent erosion.

It's unfair to assume livestock is detrimental to the forest. Livestock on the forest, unlike wildlife, is managed. Grazing brush and undergrowth lessen fire fuel. Permittees clear trails with chainsaws, axes, and shovels carried on their packhorses. This makes the trails accessible to hunters, bikers, and hikers. Forest Service trail maintenance budgets seem to get smaller each year. Many ponds have been developed on the forest over the past 75 years to provide water sources for livestock that are used by wildlife as well. The plan needs to allow for the maintenance of these. I would encourage the plan to provide for education of recreational users as to benefits of grazing and how it is managed.

Plan needs to reflect quantifiable evidence. It must be flexible to adjust with climate change and population growth that is specific to the area.