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Comments: Thank you for the careful consideration of future forest uses and for taking our public comment on the Plan. I do both motorized and non-motorized recreation on all 3 Forests in this plan update, and often use 4wd access to non-motorized recreation. I also have done some work on the Uncompahgre NF. Through these experiences, I have come to understand why we must balance the different human uses of these public lands and I think this Plan is great opportunity to set the framework for success. However, while reading through the plan, I found a couple inconsistencies and I think the Plan should account for them. The theme of my comments is that the Plan must adequately account for the needs of wildlife in the context of the long-term expansion of recreation and continuation of grazing on these Forests.

Wildlife and natural habitats need primitive land, as defined in your ROS fact sheet/FAQs (thanks for putting those together). If, as shown in that fact sheet, only 11% of the total land is primitive right now, and if we reduce that further (as proposed), we are directly reducing the diversity and quality of habitat. I think the majority of forest users value the outstanding habitat on these Forests, and leadership from the Forest Service is required to determine where this outstanding habitat can be connected, expanded, and improved. The GMUG administrators have certainly seen rapid expansion in visitor numbers on these lands - and this trend is going to continue in the future. For example, by designating more roadless areas in the Uncompahgre Plateau (especially on the east side) or more wilderness in the Northern San Juans, and by working in close partnership with other land management agencies (BLM), we could connect the habitat corridors that wildlife use to migrate from summer to winter ranges. A good start is the Roubideau Area/Camel Back Wilderness, and some areas in the northern San Juans. Please find ways to duplicate this elsewhere, especially on the Uncompahgre and Gunnison Forests. The Plan should provide this direction.

I also respectfully submit that some grazing leases for specific sensitive areas (riparian but also more broadly defined) should be allowed to expire and not renewed because cattle grazing is incompatible with sensitive habitat. While it's possible to graze using best management practices without significantly degrading some areas, others are destroyed by any number of cattle. In my opinion, the desired conditions for riparian areas (e.g. FW-DC-RMGD-02) cannot be attained in conjunction with grazing in place. In other words, FW-DC-RNG-01 is not possible in some places because grazing cannot occur "while maintaining or achieving desired ecological conditions." We need to compromise, but we must prioritize sensitive habitat. I appreciate the long history of ag/ranching in our communities and I think we need to promote that; but not at the expense of ecologically sensitive habitat (which also has arguably more commercial value for outfitters, guides, etc.). We should be more strategic about allocating or renewing grazing leases.

Once we develop an area for recreation (whether for wilderness hikers, mountain bikers, OHVs), it will stay developed forever and visitation will only increase over time. Areas impacted by grazing can eventually mostly recover, but both recreation and grazing come at the inevitable expense of habitat and wildlife. Hikers have an impact, though we hate to admit it. As we know, people generally don't wander off trails and roads, so the key to preserving habitat is not making new roads or trails of any kind. Cows on the other hand wander everywhere and destroy sensitive habitat when they're allowed in (it's good forage). Please select Alternative D, which has the maximum possible "Primitive" or "Wilderness" designation, and refine Alt. D to review the renewal of grazing leases in context of habitat preservation.

Thank you.