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First name: Thomas

Last name: Winterton

Organization: Intermountain Economic Consulting, LLC

Title: Managing Director

Comments: Comments in regard to the Ashley National Forest - Forest Plan Revision #49606

To all it may concern,

I am writing these comments as a representative of Intermountain Economic Consulting, LLC. We are contracted to Daggett County, Duchesne County, and Uintah County to promote and support economic development and county planning. In our planning, we have not overlooked the substantial impact our government partners play. These include but are not limited to the Bureau of Land Management, The US Forest Service, the State of Utah, and The Ute Tribe. The Forest Service manages large tracts of land that fall inside all three of the counties we consult for. In regards to these comments, I wish to focus specifically on the forest land that is the Ashley National Forest in Uintah and Daggett Counties.

Daggett County is one of the most scenic places in the state of Utah. With Flaming Gorge Reservoir, The county experiences large spikes of tourism during the summer months. On any given week during the summer months, it is not unusual to see ten to fifteen thousand people travel into Daggett County to recreate. This large influx of visitors creates some challenges for a small county with limited resources. The small county of Daggett County is faced with providing services such as police and medical for a population that exceeds their year round population by as much as 15X. Because the visitor spike is seasonal, it is very hard to attract permanent tax base that comes from commercial business. It is very difficult to build a sustaining brick and mortar business based on a partial year business.

As the Ashley National Forest looks to update it's management plan, our company would like the Forest Service to consider allowing for the development of a recreational ski area that would permit a ski resort to lease forest ground somewhere on the north slope of the land that lies between Greendale Junction at the US191 and Utah State rd 44 junction and the Burnt Creek area to the west.

A ski resort would perfectly compliment the current economy in Dagget and Uintah Counties. It would round out the recreational calendar offering winter activities that could draw visitors for the remainder of the months not served by the lake activities. By permitting a ski resort, it would make it financially feasible for businesses to invest and locate in Daggett County. The opportunity to provide skiing in the one of the most scenic areas of the state and even country would rival any other recreational areas around. With the US National Parks bursting at the scenes, it is necessary to begin the process of providing additional recreational hotspots to help alleviate and provide options to the popular parks such as Yellowstone, Zions, etc. It would provide vital resources to the cash strapped counties. It would also have a large economic impact on Vernal City and Uintah County, Along with Rock Springs, Wyoming. Allowing for a ski resort on the Forest ground would be a great benefit to the entire surrounding area.

Preliminary research shows that the Forest area in the locations I indicated have both the acreage and the elevation to create a ski resort that would rival in every way the ski resorts found in other locations of Utah, both in size and in elevation. Daggett County has ample water rights to support such an endeavor. There are significant investor dollars that would flow into the area to develop out a project. In addition, the trees that would be removed to allow for the ski runs would improve the water shed quality and provide more water for use. The snow melt would end up in the same watershed drainage area that it was pulled from providing little impact on water resources.

I hope that as the Forest updates and crafts it's plan, it will seriously consider implementing into the plan the

latitude to allow for a ski area and all that it entails.

Respectfully,

Thomas Winterton
Managing Director,
Intermountain Economic Consulting, LLC