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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I recommend Alternative D in all categories to be selected by the Forest Service.

A. Ouray County is 50% Public Lands and 50% Private Lands. What happens on public lands affects our county in many aspects, like preserving the wilderness areas, climate change affects, recreation, the tourist industry, the scenic value, migration routes of wild animals, the spread of noxious weeds, wildfire risk, and clean water flows, to name a few.

B. WILDERNESS. According to David Attenborough's "A Life on the Planet", in 1937 66% of the world was wilderness. In 2020 35% of the world was wilderness. 15,000,000,000 trees are cut every year. David encourages "REWILD THE WORLD AND RESTORE BIODIVERSITY!". The Revised GMUG can be part of the solution, not part of the problem by accepting Alternative D.

C. TIMBER. The forest Service should choose Alternative D. There is a huge difference between the Forest Service's Preferred Alternative and Alternative D in the amount of acres for the Timber production, sale production, and harvest acres per year.

1. Beside leaving the carbon in our forests to help deter the negative affects of climate change, The Citizens Coalitions' recommendations in their respective areas are not addressed. Sheep Mountain Alliance was started because of the excessive timber cutting. A main concern has been that in the past not enough tree restoration and planting had been done. "Sam Staley said one key issue the updated plan addresses is climate change..." (Ouray County Plaindealer. 9/7-13, 2023). Since the future effects are unknown, why not re-evaluate the resistance, resilience and transitions strategies every five years instead of every 20 years?

2. The Forest Service's definition of "suitable timber" has changed.

a. Healthy green trees should be left alone, able to grow. Unfortunately, the forest Service is underfunded to carry out their most important work and projects. But short term economy benefits should not override ecology. it takes 120-160 years for alpine forests to regenerate.

b. Jason Sibold, researcher for Rocky Mt Research Station, studies tree mortality and forest ecosystems. He says: "On the fire front, we really don't have evidence at this point that beetle-killed forests increase fire risk -- fires are much more driven by weather conditions. Nonetheless, beetle kill can significantly increase the challenges and hazards of wildland fire fighting - falling trees, very hard to move through downed timber and fire likely moves through these stands faster (as wind speeds increase). These variables might result in decreased suppression effectiveness or increased risk to a community when the weather conditions are ripe for wildfire."

c. Mason Osgood (Sheep Mountain Alliance) says, "Legislation is leaning more favorable toward logging living, healthy, green trees; Montrose Forest Products could not make the dead trees profitable. Now, instead of logging dead or dying trees to reduce fire danger while helping the local economy, the Forest Service -- using SBEADMR's new "condition based management" -- is authorizing loggers to remove healthy, living spruce-fir and aspen trees...the agency's decision to target tens of thousands of acres of green trees for logging is a dramatic shift, one based on economics rather than forest ecology."

d. The forest Service's Preferred Alternative runs contrary to the Biden administration's recent executive order to identify, protect and conserve old growth and mature forests.

D. For F. G. and H Categories, please listen to the citizens in their respective areas and settle on Alternative D.