



December 7, 2017

Comments on the Draft Assessment Reports for the GMUG National Forests

Dear Forest Service planning team:

On behalf of the Colorado Farm & Food Alliance, Slow Food Western Slope, and Valley Organic Growers Association, we write to provide the following input on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests' resource assessment reports, out for review as part of the forest plan revision process. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

We benefit from strong conservation practices and sound resource management for our national forests, which include the source areas and reservoirs for our water supplies, help clean our air, provide habitat for wildlife and promote biodiversity, and offer exceptional recreational opportunities as well as other quality-of-life amenities important to our valley.

We also look to a plan such as this, that could be in place for decades, to provide management with its eye to the future, to strengthen ecosystems and their resiliency, to promote long-term forest and habitat health, to account for and address climate change, and to keep remaining roadless and other backcountry lands as intact and undisturbed as possible, even as development pressures increase.

To these ends, we urge that the U.S. Forest Service look for opportunities to recommend for Congressional protection additional wilderness lands, and additional eligible waterways as wild and scenic rivers, and to implement other protective designations. We recommend that the Forest Service keep logging, oil and gas development, and incompatible uses out of roadless areas, important watersheds and habitat, and other critical natural or recreational lands. We ask that the Forest Service properly account for, and require management to actively limit carbon and other climate pollution, including that which results from energy resource extraction and development.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input. Our organizations would like to remain involved in this process as we work with your agency to develop a new, revised plan for the National Forest, a plan that works for the local community, honors the rich heritage of agriculture and pride of place, supports area businesses, provides for recreation and other public use, and manages for a sustainable future that supports a healthy North Fork Valley, and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Kolbensschlag". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "P".

Pete Kolbensschlag, Colorado Farm & Food Alliance, and for
Jim Brett, Slow Food Western Slope
Emily Hartnett, Valley Organic Growers Assoc.