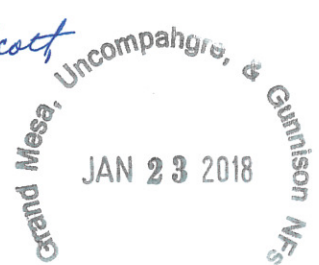




*Scanned to Scott
Clay & Sam*



311 N. Henson St. Lake City, Colorado 81235 970-944-2225 www.hinsdalecountycolorado.us

January 18th, 2018

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests
Scott Armentrout, Forest Supervisor
2250 S. Main St.
Delta, CO 81416

Dear Mr. Armentrout,

The Hinsdale County Board of Commissioners appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG) Plan in respect to Wilderness, at risk species and air quality.

As a County that is 96.5% public lands, home to three national forests as well as BLM land, Hinsdale County supports certain guiding principles and values regarding public lands within our borders:

- No net loss of private land (*see enclosed Hinsdale County Resolution, Series 2015, No.18)
- Public Safety and access to public lands
- Timbering and forest health
- Grazing as an agricultural asset as well as low fuel wildfire mitigation
- No increased Wilderness or associated impacts

Forty-eight percent of Hinsdale County's public land is currently considered Wilderness or de facto wilderness. This severely hampers active management for forest health. The public lands within Hinsdale County have much standing dead due to insect infestation. Increased management is necessary to reduce risk of catastrophic wildfire and its consequences. We have experienced two catastrophic wildfires (The Little Sand in 2012 and the Papoose in 2013). Any additional wildfire would have significant impacts on our county, including:

- Air Quality
- Water Quality

- Habitat
- Flooding
- Public Safety
- Land Loss
- Economic development and tourism

The requirement for identifying additional Wilderness must be balanced with the need for active forest management for the sake of all the factors previously mentioned. Wilderness reduces the ability of forest managers to be nimble in response to increasing risk factors.

Some of our concerns include, first, do each of these designated inventoried areas meet Wilderness Criteria? Second, it would be best if any "suitable timber acres" be excluded for the sake of forest health. Third, any existing roads that could still be used for timbering should be excluded from the wilderness evaluation.


In regards to protected species, there have been extensive local efforts for protection of the Gunnison Sage Grouse. This Board is of the position that additional Federal protection efforts on behalf of the Gunnison Sage Grouse are not necessary.

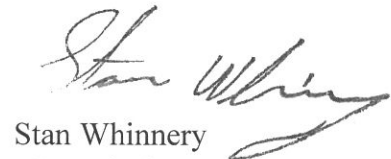
Again, we thank you for your time in discussing the GMUG draft forest plan and providing opportunity for input on behalf of Hinsdale County. We appreciate all the effort that you and your staff have put into the revision process so far.

Best regards,

The Hinsdale Board of County Commissioners


Susan Thompson
Chair


Cindy Dozier
Vice Chair


Stan Whinnery
Commissioner

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HINSDALE COUNTY, COLORADO

RESOLUTION NO. 18

Series 2015

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING NO NET LOSS OF PRIVATE LANDS WITHIN HINSDALE COUNTY

Whereas, pursuant to C.R.S. § 30-11-101(2), the Hinsdale County, Colorado Board of County Commissioners has general authority regarding the health, safety and welfare of its citizens;

Whereas, Hinsdale County currently contains 96.5% public lands, including lands of the United States Forest Service and United States Bureau of Land Management;

Whereas, Hinsdale County supports meaningful access to all public lands and supports maintaining the means of access as being useful to all citizens, including those unable to travel by foot;

Whereas, Hinsdale County depends on Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) funding, which is only authorized by the United States Congress on an annual basis and, is therefore, unreliable;

Whereas, the economy of Hinsdale County is severely limited due to the lack of private land for development and the loss of any private land to public entities further reduces the property tax revenue badly needed to operate Hinsdale County; and

Whereas, Hinsdale County places a high value on private property rights and the preservation of those rights.

Now, therefore, the Hinsdale County Board of County Commissioners supports a concept of "No Net Loss of Private Land." This concept entails acquiring federally owned lands for the private sector to offset any privately owned lands that the federal government acquires so that there is no net loss of privately owned land in Hinsdale County. This balance can be achieved through land exchanges within Hinsdale County, auction of equitable public lands to the private sector, or other available legal means.

INTRODUCED by Commissioner Cindy Dozier, seconded by
Commissioner Susan Thompson and passed this 7th day of
October, 2015.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF HINSDALE COUNTY, COLORADO

By: [Signature]
Susan Thompson, Chair

By: [Signature]
Stan Whinnery, Commissioner

By: [Signature]
Cindy Dozier, Commissioner

ATTEST:

[Signature]

Linda Pavich, County Clerk & Recorder

by [Signature], Deputy

