



January 29, 2018

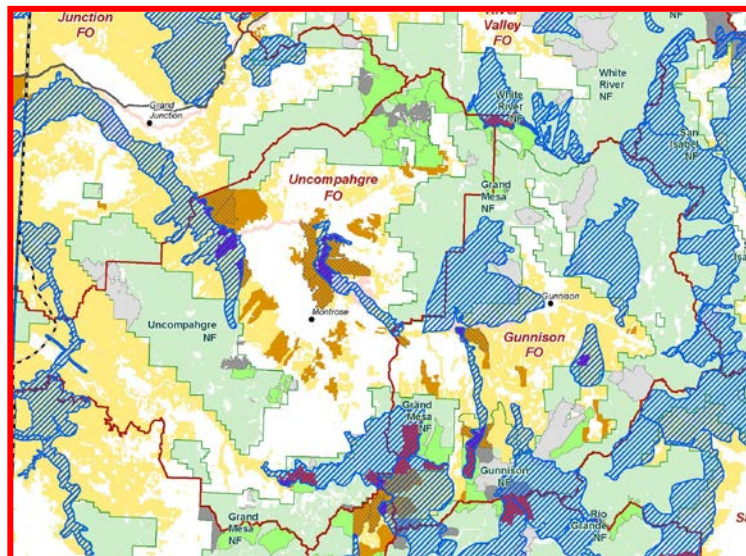
Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre-Gunnison National Forest (GMUG NF)
Forest Plan Revision

Dear GMUG NF:

On behalf of the Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF), please accept this comment letter in support of your action to include Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep (RMBHS) and desert bighorn sheep (DBHS) on the Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) list for your forest plan revision. WSF and our Colorado affiliate the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society (RMBS) appreciate the GMUG's inclusion and analysis of RMBHS and DBHS as an SCC, based on the stressors and challenges to bighorn sheep long-term persistence on the GMUG NF.

Based on December 29, 2017 email correspondence with Clay Speas, GMUG NF Acting Renewable Resources & Planning Staff Officer, and phone conversations earlier today, WSF and RMBS (and others) look forward to the GMUG's detailed assessment of RMBHS and DBHS, both scheduled for release and public review by mid-January 2018, and apparently now going to be made public later this week. However, since today is the comment deadline on Assessment 5, WSF does not want to miss the comment deadline and is thus submitting this comment letter today.

Based on mapping done over the past decade for the WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group (WSWG) by Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), there is significant overlap between BHS distribution and active domestic sheep grazing allotments on several portions of the GMUG NF.

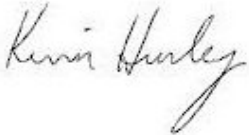


WSF and RMBS (and others) expect the GMUG NF to address long-term persistence of BHS on the GMUG, given the high potential for Risk of Contact (RoC) between BHS and domestic sheep on the

GMUG NF. Inclusion of BHS as an SCC will necessitate a RoC analysis by the GMUG NF, utilizing the best available science and the most current mapping/modeling showing BHS distribution across the GMUG NF. WSF and RMBS look forward to the GMUG NF's analysis of RMBHS and DBHS current and future status and persistence on the GMUG; if needed, we are willing to provide data and input to the GMUG NF that will assist in your analysis.

Thank you in advance for notifying us when those detailed assessments come out later this week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin Hurley".

Kevin Hurley
VP of Conservation & Operations