Hinsdale County
COLORADO

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Shane Walker, Planning and Information Staff Officer
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May 16, 2018

Dear Shane,

The Hinsdale County Board of Commissioners appreciates this early opportunity to comment on the first phases and structure of the forest plan revision for the GMUG. As a county that is almost 97% public land, we have a strong vested interest in the forests within our borders. We also thank you and the other staff for spending time with the multiple counties to more effectively move forward in this process.

As Jon Waschbusch said during our joint meeting, this plan seems like an effort to simulate a county masterplan. We appreciate the more adaptive approach to planning as well as the emphasis on multi-use. In particular, we agree with "the shared vision of a landscape of resilient ecosystems sustaining balance multiple-use opportunities far into the future". Please see our general viewpoints as to how we prefer this vision to be carried out.

Specific comments:
*In the Key Needs for Change (Foundational Guiding Principles), add "Resiliency" to number 3
*Include historic uses in all considerations
*Try to have user groups get together for input
*Consider changing the term "Management Areas" to "Planning Areas"
*Public Enjoyment: Including the word "balance" somewhere in this narrative; there is balance between use and management that should not be lost; public enjoyment will be diminished without healthy forests
*Commodity Use and Community Connections: Healthy Forests = Water should be included here. The forest is the largest reservoir in the world and, as such, should be prioritized for health; thank you for including the idea of diversification of the timber program to include new technologies and other merchantable species

In the Management Area framework: Is there an appeal process? If "Natural Processes Dominate", how can healthy forest management concepts be elevated more? Without a healthy forest, recreation and multi-use will be diminished; Is mineral withdrawal addressed?

In general, we support the direction of this planning process and appreciate being included as it goes along.

Hinsdale County has some general viewpoints regarding public land with our county:
*With approximately 50% Wilderness and de facto wilderness in our county, we oppose any additional wilderness-type land. We also oppose and wilderness impacts from adjacent counties
*Maximizing timbering is a major step towards forest health which decreases fire risk and retains water
*Maximizing grazing leads to good stewardship of the land and decreases low fuels
*We support multi-use as a positive value as well as access for the public to be enhanced rather than diminished
*Public safety should be a consideration without being heavy handed, especially as it pertains to telecom
*Hinsdale County is a Right to Farm and Ranch County and supports stewardship of the land through grazing and management of ranchers

Thank you for your time and attention to these comments,

Respectfully,

Hinsdale Board of County Commissioners

Susan Thompson
Chair

Cindy Dezier
Vice Chair

Stan Whinnery
Commissioner