Katy-Jane Angwin

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For the attention of: GMUG Plan Revision Team

I am the Assistant Technical Professor of Agriculture at Western Colorado Community College. I have been heavily involved in the livestock industry for the last 10 years, including managing grazing allotments for both summer and winter cattle grazing. I have a strong background in rangeland ecology and management, and was an active member of the Society for Range Management throughout my undergraduate career. I understand the extreme importance of grazing leases to the economic feasibility of the livestock operations, particularly in the western states, and am also an avid recreational user of public lands.

I have read the Scoping Stage document for the GMUG, and have the following comments:

Vision and Distinctive Roles & Contributions Section

I am really glad to see the acknowledgement for the multiple use standard for Forest Service Lands. This is important for any rangelands – they are public lands and should be used as such, by many different entities. No one such use should be placed as higher priority than another, and the coexistence of a variety of uses is feasible and desirable, and the lands should be managed as such. However, this does not mean that uses may not impact each other, and these implications should be carefully considered.

While managing cattle herds on mountain leases spanning tens of thousands of acres, I know firsthand the care and diligence that goes into the fencing, the water, the grazing strategies and rotations, and the management of plant communities that livestock grazers manage. We are careful stewards of the land, and management the ecosystem for quality and diversity. This helps the continuity of the leasing permit and the feed systems for grazing animals – including wildlife species. We are also the people present on that land, notice the ecosystem changes, and are often the first responders to both natural disasters and people accidents.

As I mentioned, I understand the critical importance these grazing lands play for the economic sustainability of ranchers, and thereby ranching communities, and thereby many counties in the western states, and thereby the heritage of the west that attracts the many tourists that drive so many other parts of economy – you can see the links! Ranchers pay to use these grazing lands, and, according to the Department of the Interior, this contributes approximately $1.5 billion annually to the United States economy.

Key Needs for Change Section

As a recreational user of public lands myself, and living in western Colorado, I understand the need to consider recreational uses. However, all aspects of land use must be managed, and as such, so should recreational implications. This needs to be included in the Forest Plan.

With my background in rangeland ecology, I understand the importance of a diverse ecosystem, and desirable vs. undesirable plant species within a plant community. However, what a “perfect” grazing site looks like will vary greatly between regions, and even within the same allotment. These site-specific variations need to be taken into consideration in the plan – particularly in regions where moisture is of concern.

I was glad to see the inclusion of the Scoping Document’s statement about minimizing wildlife/livestock conflicts in coordination with permittees.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment during the GMUG Scoping Stage, and hope you will take my comments into consideration. Ranchers do a wonderful job as stewards of the land, and these grazing permits are not only an integral part of their livelihoods, but as economic drivers for the western counties as a whole.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information from me.

Katy-Jane Angwin