



May 28, 2018

Mr. Scott Armentrout  
GMUG National Forest  
2250 South Main St.  
Delta, CO 81416

Dear Mr. Armentrout:

Monarch Mountain appreciates the work that your team has put in thus far in revising the GMUG National Forest Plan and for providing informative web content on how best to be involved as the revision process unfolds. Monarch Mountain would like to submit the following comments concerning the Key Needs for Change.

Monarch Mountain supports the GMUG efforts in providing a strategic and adaptive direction with the plan. As the forest has changed due to ecological or human impacts, so must our ability to create a plan that best meet the needs identified through this process. Creating and maintaining an accessible and simplified plan is smart.

Identifying key factors that contribute to social and economic sustainability on the forest is paramount. As one of the largest employers in the region, Monarch Mountain plays a major role in bringing thousands of visitors to our local communities. Monarch Mountain employs up to 350 people during the winter months. Activities both within the ski area and on the cat-skiing permitted lands of the GMUG provide people and communities with a range of social and economic sustainability for present and future generations. Future ski area expansion plans into the GMUG identified in our 2011 MDP plans will only further enhance our ability to contribute to these causes.

Monarch Mountain considers itself stewards of the forest and it's in our best interest to take care of the lands that we operate on. We strive to utilize best management practices with on-mountain projects and request that the new forest plan will incorporate this approach when considering future management of the forest adjacent to the ski area. In consideration of the current state of the forest and spruce beetle infestation; firefighting, ecosystem-based management, hazard mitigation and maintenance are of the utmost importance as we move forward.

Integrating resource management so that these issues can be dealt with in a timely manner with many options available is important to include in the new plan. Highly developed areas such as the Monarch Pass region that includes a major highway, numerous utility lines, and established recreation sites must include options to manage fuels and to create defensible areas adjacent to this vital infrastructure. Management of these hazardous resources must focus on protecting investments and providing public safety while maintaining scenic values.

High use recreation/developed ski areas providing downhill activities are forecasted to increase in visitation in the coming decades. In fact, downhill skiing remains the most popular activity on the GMUG. Monarch Mountain is one of the few ski areas in Colorado perched at such a high elevation along the Continental Divide which could play a key role in providing public enjoyment of winter sports as this season appears to become shorter and more susceptible to erratic weather patterns. As emerging trends such as hybrid backcountry use increases, our backcountry snowcat operation is also poised to increase in popularity on the GMUG.

In conclusion, we appreciate the work and time that your team has put into the GMUG Forest Plan Revision process. Monarch Mountain aims to continue in providing high quality recreational opportunities into the distant future while striving to be good stewards of the lands we operate on.

Thank you for this opportunity to review and comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Pressly', written in a cursive style.

Scott Pressly  
VP Mountain Operations  
Monarch Mountain  
#1 Powder Place  
Salida, CO 81201  
719-530-5014