

May 30, 2018

I have lived in the Crested Butte area for over 20 years and have hiked the Granite Basin/Cement Creek Mountain area numerous times. It is a gem. Having an area close to town that offers solitude, quiet and magnificent scenery is worthy of the highest protection. Wilderness.

Below are my comments directly related to the Forest Service Scoping document.

A. Commodity Use and Community Connections

The GMUG's outstanding scenery and recreation opportunities generate tourism, an important industry and a major economic contributor to local communities. The beauty and accessibility of the landscape also contributes to the desirability of the area for new residents and the growth of second home development.

The Granite Basin/Cement Creek Mountain area is a perfect location for Wilderness designation and could benefit existing residents, homeowners in Crested Butte South and visitors. Having a Wilderness close to a large, and growing, population center increases home values and offers a recreational amenity in an area away from the noise and pollution of motorized vehicles.

B. Maintain the Diversity of Plant and Animal Communities

Provide direction to maintain existing, relatively unfragmented big game habitat and associated hunting opportunities, and other wildlife habitat, in the context of increasing pressure from development, including recreational trails.

The Granite Basin/Cement Creek Mountain area is currently seldom used by recreationists and is an important habitat for wildlife and elk migration. It should be protected from trail development and motorized use. With the current pressure to build more trails, lack of funding for our public lands and the pressure to open up more and more of our public lands to commercial and extreme recreational activity, it is more important than ever to protect areas that have Wilderness characteristics. There is no question that the Granite Basin/Cement Creek area is worthy of Wilderness designation.

Sincerely,
Maureen Hall