

June 1, 2018

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests
GMUG Plan Revision Team
2250 South Main Street
Delta, CO 81416



Re: GMUG Forest Plan Revision: Scoping

Dear Mr. Armentrout and the GMUG Forest Planning Team,

Thank you for extending the comment period on the scoping material and for an inclusive, accessible process throughout this Forest Plan Revision.

CBMBA is the oldest mountain bike club in the world, since 1983, and we are rapidly growing our stewardship and conservation efforts to better protect the landscape where we love to ride. We represent over 700 members, and we take pride in the best possible mountain bike experiences, but we look out for all recreation experiences. Protecting the Gunnison Valley landscape through stewardship and advocacy is an integral part of our mission. We work hard to collaborate with all stakeholders to find the best possible solutions to balance a variety of recreation types, preserve access for users, and protect opportunities to indulge and rejoice in our beloved public lands. We have been stewarding the lands around Crested Butte and the Gunnison Valley for over 35 years. We recognize that mountain biking, recreation, and trail use are staples of our economy, and a cherished way of life. Many Gunnison Valley residents choose to live here, raise kids here, and make a living here because of our opportunities to recreate on public lands. CBMBA believes that recreation engenders authentic connections to the environment and that recreation is a tool for environmental awareness. We have found our best success in collaboration and partnerships with other user groups and organizations, and our best and biggest partner is the Gunnison Ranger District.

We find your scoping comments thorough, concise, and easily accessible to the general public. As you move forward with the planning process, we encourage you to 1) use the Gunnison Public Lands Initiative's (GPLI) proposal to inform how management areas are determined and 2) to continue to emphasize collaborative stewardship efforts in the Revised Forest Plan. We are also glad to see that you have 3) recognized the need for new, sustainable trails.

1. Use the Gunnison Public Lands Initiative Proposal as a template for the Forest Management Areas in the Gunnison Valley

We are a proud member of the GPLI. We have been a part of the GPLI since its advent. Our comments here are to further support for the comments the GPLI has submitted to the Forest Service and their consensus proposal for Wilderness and Special Management Areas. We encourage the Forest Service to recognize the depth and detail of the GPLI's collaborative process among various public lands interests by ensuring that the

Management Area Framework proposed by the Forest Service in the planning process closely reflects the GPLI proposal. While GPLI's proposed protection areas do not use the same classification system as proposed in Part III on pages 6-8, we believe that GPLI's proposed management recommendations can be adapted to fit within this system.

CBMBA has found the GPLI to be a beacon of light in terms of community collaboration and consensus. That collaboration is unique and a progressive approach. While no plan will meet the exact interests of all individuals, the consensus reached in the GPLI proposal among mountain bike, motorized use, ranching, conservation, sportsmen, and water interest groups is exemplary. We have pored over the prescriptions proposed in the GPLI process and we feel the proposal is in the best interest of the Forest Plan as the many stakeholders have vetted current and future management concerns in an effort to find the best protections and a sustainable future. CBMBA specifically supports the collaborative GPLI approach that concluded the Granite Basin area is best protected with a Special Management Area.

2. Continue to emphasize collaborative stewardship efforts in the Forest Plan Revision

CBMBA appreciates this statement on page 1, "The multiple uses that occur on these Forests contribute to the identity of adjacent communities, enhancing their prosperity and quality of lives. These communities, in turn, are partners in protecting natural resources and perpetuating this unifying vision through collaboration, education, and shared stewardship." This statement reflects our beliefs in the importance of public lands to our local communities and the responsibility of local communities to be active partners in the protection and stewardship of the landscapes they call home.

CBMBA contributes over 2500 volunteer hours on public lands every year. Recently, CBMBA has created the Crested Butte Conservation Corps (CBCC), a paid stewardship crew fully funded by CBMBA. In 2017, the CBCC worked on over 150 miles of trails, collected over 750 pounds of trash and human waste, removed a grill, two recliner chairs, and two toilets from the Forest, and cut out over 600 downed trees that impeded trails and roads in the Gunnison National Forest. Deepening our commitment to community stewardship on Forest Service lands through volunteer community workdays and the CBCC is a central component of our strategic vision of CBMBA.

While CBMBA has a strong, effective, and respectful relationship with our GMUG National Forest partners, we hope the GMUG Forest Service will make collaboration with community partners an institutional value at the GMUG that will withstand time and changes in staffing. CBMBA recommends adding the following Need for Change statement under Contribute to Social and Economic Stability on page 3: "Provide direction on best practices and acceptable methods for engaging partners on recreation and stewardship projects".

In addition, CBMBA recognizes that recreational use, even when thoughtfully planned, can have detrimental impacts on the ecological value of the Forest. This is why we have created the CBCC and contribute so many volunteer hours to our public lands. We

believe that recreation must be matched with stewardship efforts. To ensure that future recreational resources are protected on the GMUG, CBMBA encourages the Forest Service to add the following need for change statement on page 4 under Social and Economic Stability: “Plan for future recreational amenities, including trails and campgrounds, concurrently with anticipated stewardship needs.”

3. Recognition of the need for new, sustainable trails

After growing our stewardship efforts, the second major strategic focus for CBMBA is to work with the GMUG National Forest and community partners to build the trails in our Master Plan. (Available on our website here:

<https://crestedbuttemountainbike.com/cbmba-master-plan/>) We believe our Master Plan enhances connectivity, promotes sustainable trail development, and will improve the recreational resource in the northern Gunnison Valley.

CBMBA appreciates the inclusion of the following need for change statement in the Social and Economic Sustainability Section on page 4: “Plan for increased trail development that concentrates uses in sustainable settings”. This statement both reflects the need for new trails, as well as the importance of ensuring that those trails are sustainable.

CBMBA is grateful to the efforts of the GMUG Forest Planning team to so thoughtfully plan and care for the landscape we call home. We encourage you to integrate the GPLI proposal into your planning process and to continue to bolster community stewardship efforts. We appreciate your recognition of the need for sustainable trails.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and look forward to continue to partner with you in the future.

David Ochs – Executive Director
Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association
Since 1983
dave@cbmba.org
970.349.7324

