



## COLORADO

### Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources  
1313 Sherman Street, Room 718  
Denver, CO 80203

September 24, 2018

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

Dear Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison Forests Planning Staff:

The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) appreciates the opportunity to participate and provide comments during the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests Plan Revision.

CWCB would like to refer GMUG staff to the Colorado Department of Natural Resources' map viewer tool for review of all instream flow (ISF) water rights in the wilderness evaluation areas. The CWCB encourages the Forest Service (FS) to use the ISF Program to achieve instream flow protection without unilateral action and bypass flow requirements on special use permits. The map viewer can be accessed at <https://gis.colorado.gov/dnrviewer/Index.html?viewer=mapviewer>.

The GMUG draft Wilderness Evaluation Report evaluates the wilderness characteristics of each inventoried area. CWCB appreciates that this evaluation included a consideration of existing water rights in each area. For a further understanding of water issues and priorities, CWCB encourages the FS to review Colorado's Water Plan and the Basin Implementation Plans (BIPs) for the Gunnison, Southwest, and Colorado Basins. These documents provide detailed descriptions of the projects that local water leaders have identified for meeting the area's water needs. The Gunnison Basin shares the most overlap with GMUG lands, so we specifically recommend review of the Gunnison BIP's description of water project priorities in Section 4 of that document. The following projects described in the Gunnison BIP may be located in or near areas that received a high rating in the Wilderness Evaluation Report.

| GMUG Wilderness Evaluation Area | Gunnison BIP Ref # | Project Name                                               | Project Sponsor                                            |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| G1: East Elk                    | 32                 | Elk Home Ditch Improvement, Steuben Creek Flow Restoration | Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District            |
| P4-82: Beckwiths                | 52                 | Horse Ranch Reservoir                                      | Dion and Dixie Luke                                        |
| P4-82: Beckwiths                | 57                 | East Beckwith Enlargement - Lost Lake Reservoir            | Fire Mountain Canal, North Fork Water Conservancy District |



The full Gunnison BIP is available at [colorado.gov/pacific/cowaterplan/gunnison-river-basin](http://colorado.gov/pacific/cowaterplan/gunnison-river-basin).

We encourage you to work closely with the Gunnison Basin Roundtable and the associated project sponsors if you proceed with a wilderness designation in these areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions please contact CWCB Stream and Lake Protection Section Chief Linda Bassi at [linda.bassi@state.co.us](mailto:linda.bassi@state.co.us) or 303-866-3441, ext. 3204.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lauren Ris', with a stylized, cursive script.

Lauren Ris  
CWCB Deputy Director