

Timber interests on the GMUG

Commenters

Norm Birtcher, Resource Forester, Montrose Forest Products

Doug Jones, Doug Jones Sawmill, Grand Junction

Eric Sorensen, Delta Timber, Montrose

Marti Whitmore, Club 20 Public Lands Committee

Chad Stewart, Interim Forest Superintendent

General Comments on Jobs

Timber products from GMUG create up to 230 direct jobs across the three counties and include employment cutting, hauling, milling, and additional forest byproduct use as far away as Gypsum for biofuel at Eagle Valley Clean energy biomass plant; chips, for mulching materials and sawdust for playgrounds and animal bedding. Montrose Forest Products is the largest forest product operator on the forest with 93 direct jobs on one "super shift" per week of about 50 hours.

Timber sales and administration within the GMUG portion of the Forest Service also creates up to 18 additional positions across the three zones created for timber management across the GMUG

The timber harvest on the GMUG amounts to approximately 3 million board feet per year. Hauling distance becomes the critical factor in the forest product calculus, with the forests surrounding the Montrose, Delta and Mesa counties contributing an equal amount of timber while the preponderance of the timber for the mill now sourced in the Gunnison and Saguache area.

Specific Plan comments from the timber industry

1. Have the plan state what the forest is capable of producing (formerly known as "Allowable Sale Quantity") on a sustained basis on slopes less than 40 percent. Current numbers show it at a level of 76,725 CCF.
2. At Montrose Forest Products, seven of 10 logs come from the GMUG forests and include live lodge pole, spruce and ponderosa, and beetle-kill timber, with aspen contributing a significantly smaller amount. Additional aspen timber availability is not needed by the industry currently; timber harvest should prioritize the conifer species.
3. The optimal amount of timber for the Montrose facility would be 84,000 CCF (hundred cubic feet). Small operators such as Doug Jones Sawmill in Mesa County needs 1.2 million board feet a year of beetle kill (2400 CCF). He no longer cuts in the field but purchases from others who do.
4. In the past, some smaller operators sometimes feel left out of the process by the Forest Service because the timber world operates on larger scale economics and

they were unable to participate at that scale. Make some timber sales at a smaller scale so small operators can participate, or partition larger sales.