



Outdoor Alliance GMUG Vision

Executive Summary

The Outdoor Alliance GMUG Vision (OAGV) is a blueprint for world-class sustainable recreation in the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests. The OAGV was developed in partnership with outdoor recreation and conservation organizations working across the GMUG National Forests to help guide the Forest Service during the Forest Plan Revision process.

The OAGV reflects both forest-wide and place-based recommendations that enjoy broad support from local community members, as well as regional and national stakeholders. The OAGV considers other citizens' proposals for the GMUG, recommends new policies and management designations unique to the OAGV, and offers a comprehensive vision from the outdoor recreation community.

Outdoor Recreation in the GMUG is Important

Outdoor adventures in western Colorado – including rock climbing, mountain biking, hiking, paddling, and snowsports – are more than just fun. The GMUG receives 2.6 million visits a year and human-powered outdoor recreation on the forest supports \$392 million in annual visitor spending. Outdoor recreation needs to be prioritized in the forest plan revision process.

Summary of Outdoor Alliance GMUG Vision Recommendations

Through a collaborative process, the OAGV identifies seventeen forest-wide policy recommendations, ten new designated areas and site-specific management unique to the OAGV, and it endorses three outside citizens' proposals and seven additional designated area recommendations from separate coalitions. Outdoor Alliance offers these community-sourced recommendations as a comprehensive vision for sustainable outdoor recreation in the GMUG National Forests.

I. Backcountry Areas

Some National Forests are using new management units, called backcountry areas, to manage areas that have high conservation value and include established recreation uses that make Wilderness recommendation inappropriate. The OAGV recommends designating five backcountry areas:

- Beaver Park
- Kannah Creek
- Lone Cone
- Ouray
- West Elk

II. Recreation Focus Areas

Designating recreation focus areas is a valuable way for the forest plan to address specific areas where different and/or high-use recreational resources are concentrated. A recreation focus area designation

is also appropriate for those places that provide premier recreation opportunities for a single activity (such as a popular climbing area or ski zone). The OAGV recommends designating five recreation focus areas:

- Mesa Top
- Telluride
- Turkey Flats and Pinon Mesa
- Uncompahgre Plateau (North)
- Uncompahgre Plateau (South)

III. River Corridor Management Recommendations

In addition to designated management areas, we have included additional recommendations specific to river recreation on four particularly important river corridors in the Gunnison National Forest:

- East River
- Slate River
- Taylor River (Upper & Lower)

IV. Recommended Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Western Slope of Colorado has no designated Wild and Scenic rivers, despite that the region is host to some of the nation's most prized, free-flowing rivers and streams. In addition to the streams identified in the Draft Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Evaluation (30 Eligible Wild and Scenic River segments), which Outdoor Alliance strongly supports, we recommend that the Forest Service add the following river segments to its eligibility inventory. They are all free-flowing, possess at least one outstandingly remarkable value, and are conservation priorities for the paddling community:

- Anthracite Creek and Ruby Fork Tributary
- Daisy Creek
- East River
- Slate River (Headwaters to Poverty Gulch)
- Slate River (Poverty Gulch to Oh-Be-Joyful)
- Slate River (Oh-Be-Joyful to Town of Crested Butte)
- San Miguel River (Keystone Canyon and Sawpit)
- Taylor River (Lower)
- Taylor River (Upper)
- Uncompahgre River (Uncompahgre Gorge)
- Uncompahgre River (Ouray to KOA Campground)

V. Endorsement of Full Proposals

Some community proposals have been widely negotiated across many different geographic and interest communities and are endorsed by the OAGV. The full proposals endorsed by the OAGV include:

- Gunnison Public Lands Initiative
- San Juan Wilderness Act
- Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act

VI. Individual Endorsements – Citizens’ Conservation Proposals

Other proposals contain recommendations that would in some cases positively, and other cases negatively, affect recreation in the GMUG National Forests. From the proposals with mixed impacts on outdoor recreation, the OAGV has highlighted and supports the individual recommendations which enjoy consensus support from the human-powered recreation community. The individually supported designated areas are:

- Abrams/Brown Mountain Special Interest Area
- Chalk Mountain Recommended Wilderness Area
- Hayden Mountain Recommended Wilderness Area
- Kelso Mesa Recommended Wilderness Area
- Sawtooth Recommended Wilderness Area
- UnawEEP Recommended Wilderness Area
- Mule Park Important Bird Area

Outdoor Alliance GMUG Vision Map

