


Town of Paonia



Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests
Attn: Plan Revision Team
2250 South Main Street
Delta, CO 81416
August 12, 2019

Dear GMUG Planning Team,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit comments on the Working Draft of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests Plan Revision. The GMUG National Forests are an important piece of the landscape surrounding the Town of Paonia, and the future of our town is tied closely to the future of our National Forests.

The Paonia Board of Trustees supports the Community Conservation Proposal. The Community Conservation Proposal is based on community involvement, on-the-ground fieldwork, the best available science, and the requirements in the 2012 U.S. Forest Service Planning Rule. These landscape-level conservation recommendations are integral to sustaining a healthy and wild GMUG now and into the future. Specifically, we wish to endorse inclusion of the eight areas included in the Community Conservation Proposal located within the North Fork Valley Watershed - the Electric Mountain, Elk Park, and Chalk Mountain Recommended Wilderness Areas, Currant Creek, Priest Mountain, Flattops, and Turner Creek Special Management Areas, and the Mule Park Important Bird Area. Additionally, the Coal Mountain addition to the West Elk Wilderness and Mt. Lamborn Special Interest Areas deserves landscape protections as the iconic summit of our town.

Our town is able to thrive in no small part due to the natural resources provided by the National Forests that surround us. Our National Forests provide domestic and agricultural water to our farms and orchards, wildlife habitats that bring in hunting and fishing tourism, as well as grazing pastures that hold up local ranching economies. Designating the landscapes mentioned above would favorably impact the town and protect our way of life.

The Town of Paonia Town Council requests that the GMUG planning team incorporate the above recommendations in your draft plan and alternatives moving forward in the revision process. Thank you for your consideration of the Paonia Town Council's comments.

Sincerely,



Chelsea Bookout
Mayor Pro-Tem
Town of Paonia