



June 16, 2023

Anthony Edwards, Deputy Forest Supervisor
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests
2250 South Main Street
Delta, Colorado 81416

Scoping Comments RE: Notice of Proposed Withdrawal and Public Meeting, Thompson Divide Area

Dear Deputy Supervisor Edwards,

Wilderness Workshop respectfully submits the following letter on behalf of the 185 undersigned individuals in support of the proposed Thompson Divide Withdrawal:

I support the proposed Administrative Mineral Withdrawal for the Thompson Divide and thank the Forest Service for working to provide meaningful protection for these spectacular public lands on the White River and Gunnison National Forests.

The Thompson Divide occupies nearly 225,000 acres of prime, mostly roadless, wildlife habitat, including a dozen watersheds that provide clean water to domestic and agricultural users in Western Colorado. It is relied upon by local grazers for summer range, sustaining a strong local ranching economy. Undeveloped public lands like the Thompson Divide are vital to the region's recreation and tourism economy, attracting tens of thousands of locals and visitors each year. The existing values in the area support hundreds of jobs and contribute tens of millions annually to local communities. Quite simply, the Divide is like nowhere else in Colorado.

For many years, locals have joined together to advocate for the protection of the Divide from the threat of new fossil fuel development- a use that is not compatible with the livelihoods of those who rely on this landscape today. "Unified for Thompson Divide" is a rallying cry that has brought our region's diverse communities together and captivated imaginations nationwide. I wish to thank the Bureau of Land Management, who previously accepted comments on the proposed withdrawal, and I hope Forest Service staff will consider these comments as part of your review process.

Our community's ultimate goal is to achieve permanent protection for the Divide from new mineral leasing and development. Legislative proposals, like the recently reintroduced Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act, would provide such protection. However, those proposals take time to pass through the halls of Congress. In the meantime, the proposal to



administratively withdraw Thompson Divide will provide strong interim protection—and it has my wholehearted support!

Thank you for your efforts to protect the Thompson Divide!

Sincerely,

Jeff Bier
Carbondale, CO

Anna Bernstein
Glenwood Springs, CO

Wendy Stewart
Carbondale, CO

Ron Reed
New Castle, CO

Sue Zislis
Carbondale, CO

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Redstone, CO

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