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January 5, 2024

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

*Submitted electronically via USFS Website*

**Subject: Thompson Divide Withdrawal #63679**

Dear Mr. Edwards:

The Coal Creek Watershed Coalition (CCWC) strongly supports the proposed mineral withdrawal in the Thompson Divide Area which includes Mt. Emmons near Crested Butte, Colorado. As reported in the environmental assessment the withdrawal will protect water quality and wildlife. More specifically, the withdrawal will protect water quality and watershed health in the Coal Creek Watershed which serves as the municipal water supply for the Town of Crested Butte, Colorado.

Since 2004, CCWC has been dedicated to protecting and improving water quality in Crested Butte's local watersheds. In recent years, we've worked alongside several local parties and Mt Emmons Mining Company (MEMC) to reduce the environmental impacts of the Keystone Mine, permanently prohibit mining, and improve water quality.

An administrative withdrawal of the claims in the proposed action would provide the time necessary to pass the CORE Act to permanently prohibit mining on Mt. Emmons. CCWC would like the Secretary of the Interior to approve the proposed action (Alternative A) while opting to remove the lands included in the proposed Mt. Emmons Land Exchange (#61798). By removing lands included in the Mt. Emmons Land Exchange, the land exchange can be completed in a timely manner while simultaneously allowing local parties to accomplish multiple goals to protect water quality and environmental health.



CCWC appreciates the opportunity to comment in support of the Thompson Divide Withdrawal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ashley Bembenek'.

Ashley Bembenek  
Executive Director  
Coal Creek Watershed Coalition  
P.O. Box 962  
Crested Butte, CO 81224