



December 3, 2024

Mr. Ryan Nehl
Forest Supervisor
c/o Amber Wyndham
2840 Kachina Drive
Pueblo, CO 81008

RE: Douglas County Comments on the Lower N/S Vegetation Management EA

The South Platte Enhancement Board (SPEB) was created by the South Platte Protection Plan. SPEB was established to sustain the outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) and support projects that enhance and preserve those values within portions of the South Platte River and the North Fork of the South Platte River. Those values include:

- fisheries
- geologic
- historic cultural resources
- recreational
- scenic

Among other functions, the Enhancement Board provides grants from an endowment fund to support projects that enhance these ORVs. Much of our area of responsibility occurs within the Pike National Forest areas affected by this EA.

Our board membership consists of representatives from many interest groups and stakeholders, including local governments and organizations representing or promoting fisheries, wildlife and ecosystem values; motorized recreation; non-motorized recreation; water recreation; the affected counties; water providers; private property within the affected region; grazing interests; timber interests. The board also includes at-large members.

SPEB is complementary of the work the US Forest Service does to manage the complexities of our National Forests. That sentiment extends to this current draft of the Lower North South Vegetation Management Plan EA as well. It is a well written and well considered plan. With a few minor exceptions, SPEB supports the science and premises within the document. SPEB believes that the desired outcomes and treatment priorities elaborated within the plan constitute a major step toward restoring the original ecology and appropriate vegetative conditions

throughout the affected areas of the Pike National Forest. Positive outcomes from implementation of this plan would include:

- reduced fire danger
- reduced danger of ash, sedimentation, and flash flooding within the watershed
- reduced danger to water quality within the watershed and corresponding fisheries
- improved wildlife habitat and carrying capacity
- improved forest health in many aspects
- increased forest resiliency in the face of wildfire, insect, and weather-related impacts
- reduced risk to recreation
- and reduced risk to historic and cultural resources.

These benefits will help to maintain and improve the ORVs of the South Platte River. SPEB is appreciative of the Forest Service's efforts thus far and looks forward to the positive outcomes of implementation. SPEB is a potential partner for the Forest Service in the implementation of this plan. Do not hesitate to contact our board for future planning or collaboration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andy Hough".

Andy Hough
President
South Platte Enhancement Board