

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/8/2017 4:29:11 PM

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Organization:

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Comments: Gunnison, Grand Mesa and Uncompahgre National Forests

December 8, 2017

2nd Generation Rancher in the North Fork Valley. Operating on the Henderson/West Muddy Forest Allotment.

The following comments are regarding the Nation Forests Draft Assessment Reports, but mainly the Rangeland Management Section.

Who am I. I am a Rancher. A rancher to me is someone who cares the most about conservation of the environment. Who else can say that they have had multiple generations raised on the same plot of land. We have grazed livestock on the same allotment for many generations. We care about the land that we graze on. We depend on the range land that we are permitted to use. If we don't take care of our grazing allotments, we can't maintain our livelihood. It is in our best interest to take care of our forest service allotments. We utilize the forest permits for summer grazing while we raise winter feed on our hay meadows.

Multiple use is very important. The grazing permits were intended for multiple use from the beginning and should retain that important requirement.

We have implemented rotational grazing and it has increased our forage tremendously. Stubble height needs to be coupled with trend indicators for a resource analysis to be determined. Rotational grazing has been a great management tool to promote plant recovery and has worked in several allotments.

"Nearly all of the private land in Colorado was initially acquired from the US government through one of several acts, including the Homestead Act, that were intended to stimulate settlement of the West by individual farmers and ranchers." Ranchers were the first to improve, care, maintain, and develop the National Forests. We have been raised and taught to take care of the forest land as we take care of our own land. Yet, we still believe in multiple use.

Grazing has been proven to reduce possible wild land fires. This can save the federal government from having to use funds to fight wild land fires.

The existing Forest Plan has had several years to be developed and is working. It is important that all multiple users have the common goal on the improvement of the grazing range. The Federal Government must make truthful decisions based on impartial science and scientific based facts. Not personal agendas, feelings, or political opinions.

Those trying to change the way we graze, where will they be in 10-20 years, nonetheless several generations? Will they be on the same plot of land caring for the local National Forest Service? Will they be there maintaining, caring for, improving, and developing the natural resource to improve the habitat for all species? Will they pass on these values to their children to follow in their footsteps? Ranchers will.

Respectfully,

Brandon Sullivan

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