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First name: Greg

Last name: Caton

Organization: City of Grand Junction

Title: City Manager

Comments: Dear Ms. Staley,

The City of Grand Junction has reviewed the U.S. Forest Service's notice of intent to revise the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests' Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). We understand that the U.S. Forest Service has identified the preliminary needs for change that will be used to develop a revised Forest Plan, which will replace the existing 1983 GMUG Forest Plan. Further, we understand that the U.S. Forest Service is seeking comments on the preliminary need for change, the distinctive role and contribution of the Forests, and the proposed management area framework.

The City of Grand Junction ("the City") provides the following comments in anticipation that our input will assist in preparation of the Draft Forest Plan and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

As far back as 1915, the City and the U.S. Forest Service have promoted a mutually beneficial relationship through cooperative agreements with the goals of protecting the City's municipal watershed, maintaining the health of the Forest, and achieving maximum benefits from available resources.

The most recent Memorandum of Agreement #16-MU-11020402-020 (MOU) between the City and the U.S. Forest Service, executed April 27, 2016 and effective through February 28, 2021, continues and formalizes the well-established, existing partnership between the parties to ensure protection of the quality and quantity of the City's municipal water supply; develop and implement a mechanism for continued communication and consultation between the parties in the process and practices of making and implementing land use actions; and ensure an appropriate level of involvement by each party in new and existing projects planning and development within the City's watershed area. The MOU states the commitment of the parties to work as partners in order to protect the integrity of the municipal watershed. As it relates specifically to the Forest Plan, the City agreed to participate in the GMUG's Forest Plan Revision process. In turn, the U.S. Forest Service committed that the City would have a meaningful role and opportunity for input in the GMUG Forest Plan Revision so that the U.S. Forest Service can ensure resource protection for the City's water supply as allowed under law, regulation and policy.

The City agrees that the Revised Forest Plan should specifically identify municipal watersheds as a critical resource that must be managed to protect the quantity and quality of the water supplies for present and future generations. As the U.S. Forest Service develops the "management area framework," we would suggest consideration of "place-specific guidelines" for the municipal watersheds to ensure compatible uses. City staff will be available to participate in upcoming meetings and discussions to help further development of the management area framework, the Draft Forest Plan, and the Draft EIS.

The City looks forward to continuing our formal partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. We appreciate the opportunity to comment during this scoping phase. As a partner, the City looks forward to working with the U.S. Forest Service in the process of developing a Revised Forest Plan that balances the multiple-use objectives of the GMUG lands while protecting our critical municipal watersheds.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Please feel free to contact the City's Utilities Director, Randi Kim, at 970-244-1429 or randik@gjcity.org for future involvement in the GMUG Forest Plan Revision process.

Sincerely,