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Mr. Scott Armentrout, Forest Supervisor

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests

2250 Highway 50

Delta, CO 81416

LeValley Ranch and Mark, Robbie and Hank LeValley submit the following comments regarding the Notice of Intent to revise the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG) Forest Plan.

Livestock grazing is a congressionally mandated use of the USFS and we encourage the GMUG to plan that grazing is not reduced in order to increase recreation. There are conflicts but the first and often first mitigation tool of choice for federal land management agencies is to reduce livestock grazing. Properly managed livestock grazing has positive ecological effects and helps to preserve more expansive and unfragmented landscapes that benefit wildlife and the rural economies. In addition, the ranches surrounding USFS lands provide a critical buffer to the USFS lands. We encourage the USFS to add to the Forest Plan Vision, Roles and Contributions the language that would maintain and/or improving the rangeland resource in partnership with a viable livestock industry and rural economy.

Additionally, the desired conditions that are developed for rangeland health indicators and plant community composition for the full range of ecosystems on the GMUG should include site potential based on soil type and environmental constraints. The Forest Plan should contain language that values local knowledge when determining range site potential and not just a desired condition. Too often a desired condition is listed without understanding the range site potential and this can lead to unrealistic expectations and subsequent punitive permit actions.

Sincerely,

Mark LeValley, LeValley Ranch II Ltd RLLP