

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/29/2019 6:00:00 AM

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Organization:

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Comments: United States Forest Service

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To: GMUG Forest Plan Revision Team

As a resident of Hinsdale County who has been involved in many processes in the GMUG National Forest over the years, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Working DRAFT Forest Plan Revision. As you are aware, Hinsdale County is almost 97% public land, including GMUG, Rio Grande, San Juan National Forests as well as BLM lands. Historically, Hinsdale County has had a strong vested interest in the health and long-term resiliency of the forest lands and watersheds, both within our borders, and those specifically impacting our county.

As I have been involved in the forest planning process, I have observed a measured approach to this very complex process with a strong view to the future in most of areas. I appreciate the facilitation of the meetings as well as the content and transparency by the planners. Thank you!

The Forest Plan Vision, Roles, and Contributions gives general direction regarding multi-use as it relates to recreation, commodity use, water-related uses, range and habitat, energy and mineral resources and other areas. Recognition that conditions on the landscape are ALWAYS changing, never static, should guide all aspects of the planning process. No one can really predict the future, so it is important to keep management options open so that multi-use of our forest lands can be preserved for the good of the lands and the people who use them.

Looking to the future, I encourage focus on multi-use that honors all users, diversity in recreation, and keeping an eye on public safety. The forest-water connection must also be considered for future watershed health needs. Forest Planners understand these issues. As those who know the forest world intimately and have been involved in all the forest planning tools, I respect the expertise of the USFS.

Additional considerations:

*Water and forest health: Any planning regarding water and forest health and how they are related needs to include a deep understanding of the connectiveness of the two. The SBEADMR project contained much data that could aid such a discussion. Does more Wilderness lead to a healthier forest and safer water supply? Healthy forests equal water. This should be a prime consideration in the decision-making process, especially as it applies to water-source protection, particularly in possible Wilderness areas.

*Wilderness: With almost 50% of our public land In Wilderness or de facto wilderness, Hinsdale County has historically opposed additional Wilderness or Wilderness impacts. When Wilderness is put in place, there are impacts to surrounding areas. Any decisions, made in perpetuity, put much at risk as the future is always

unknown. The forest is not static. It is ever-changing. Any decision should allow for flexibility to adjust for changing circumstances. What is the future for Rare Earth Mineral extraction? What is the plan for water source protection? When a catastrophic wildfire occurs in Wilderness, the impacts of air quality, water quality and habitat disruption are experienced far beyond any county borders. For me, these are important considerations.

*Recreation: Recreation requires access. Again, a healthy forest brings public safety for public access for public recreation. Fully investigating the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum for trends in demands makes sense to maximize the opportunity while minimizing any wear and tear on our lands. Again, flexibility for the future is important. We have no idea what recreation trends will need to be met 50 to 75 years from now. Designating land in a permanent fashion could have unintended consequences by limiting those opportunities.

I will hope to see these issues addressed in the upcoming DRAFT EIS.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Cindy Dozier

Resident, Hinsdale County District 2

Hinsdale County Commissioner, District 2 (January, 2011 [ndash] January, 2019)

GMUG Forest Plan Revision Multi County Group (2017 [ndash] present)

SBEADMR Working Group (2014 [ndash] 2017)

SBEADMR Adaptive Management Group (2017 - Present)