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GRAND COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Evan Clapper (Chair) [middot] Mary McGann (Vice Chair) Greg Halliday[middot] Jaylyn Hawks [middot] Rory Paxman Curtis Wells[middot] Gabriel Woytek

Dear Manti-La Sal National Forest Planning Staff,

On behalf of the Grand County community, the Grand County Council would like to express support for the Forest Plan Revision process, in general, and the proposed Moab Geographic Area in specific. The Moab Geographic Area supports Grand County in critical and vital ways.

First of all watershed protection is given the highest priority when another multiple use is in conflict. We appreciate that the Forest Service realizes that here on the Colorado Plateau water is the critical resource, more important than all others that you provide to the surrounding communities. All economic activity in the county depends on the dependable water supply coming from the La Sal Mountains and managed by the Manti-La Sal National Forest. The Moab Geographic Area is a great step towards protecting this critical resource in perpetuity.

A second resource the Moab Geographic Area protects is the viewshed of both Arches and Canyonlands National Parks as well as the other public lands in the area. The national park viewshed does not stop at the park boundary. Thus, protecting the viewshed is vital to protecting the experience. The Grand County economy is largely driven by these parks and the experience they, and the other public lands, offer to visitors.

The Moab Geographic Area protects the Whole Enchilada Mountain Bike Trail. This ride starting at over 10,000 feet in the La Sais and ending at the Colorado River is considered one of the best mountain bike trails in the world both technically and scenically. The ride attracts visitors from all over the world who support Moab's mountain bike economy in a very large way.

We urge inclusion of a prohibition on oil and grass drilling, including horizontal drilling, as these could compromise the water of the Geographic Area, and we urge that no new mining claims be permitted.

We understand a draft plan will be available to the public, perhaps by mid-January. We expect our constituents will be offering comments and proposals and urge the Forest to fully consider reasonable suggestions for additions to or modifications of this draft plan.

In closing, the Moab Geographic Area is a huge win for Grand County and our economy. We greatly appreciate the foresight of this proposal and look forward to working with you as the plan and alternatives move toward consideration in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,

Evan Clapper Chair, Grand County Council