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Organization:

Title:

Comments: GMUG Forest Revision Comment

My name is Adam Gall and my family and I live between Hotchkiss and Paonia. We're sandwiched between the Grand Mesa and Gunnison National Forests. We run a licensed outfitting business on the BLM and National Forests surrounding our home primarily for elk hunts. The bulk of our archery and rifle hunts take place on the permitted ground we operate on within the Uncompahgre National Forest. The elk and deer we hunt during our late season hunts primarily migrate off the Grand Mesa NF and data is showing some of the elk come in from the Gunnison NF. By way of the geographic location of our home as well as our professional endeavors, we are very much involved with and surrounded by the GMUG and for that we are extremely grateful. Our national forests and public lands in general are a treasure and should be cared for as such.

It's with all this in mind that I'm writing to express support for Alternative B in the forest plan revision process and hope the GMUG Revision Team moves forward with this plan. This plan provides the flexibility and management options necessary for the huge swaths of land the GMUG encompasses.

The continued agricultural use for livestock operators, the rapidly growing increase in recreation and travel pressure and the need for thoughtful management/extraction of existing resources like timber are addressed adequately in this plan. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, is Alternative B's approach to management of the wildlife and wildlife habitat that exists on the GMUG. Often overlooked and taken for granted, the wildlife resources on the GMUG are some of the finest in the state of Colorado not to mention the world. Our elk and deer herds, quite simply, are phenomenal. The health of those herds works in conjunction with the health of the forests and subsequently the health of an extremely robust and reliable economic driver for Colorado. Those wildlife resources require management and more than anything, they need the habitat and space to function as they always have.

Alternative B designates Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) throughout the GMUG based on boots on the ground knowledge and experience from the biologists and District Wildlife Managers for Colorado Parks and Wildlife. These are the folks who know where and how our wildlife use the landscape. Early on in this revision process, maps were laid down and important areas such as migration corridors, winter range and calving grounds were clearly identified for WMA designation. Alternative B identifies around 25% of the forest landscape to be managed as WMAs and this comes pretty close to the number that CPW as well as other involved wildlife organizations have asked for and supported (Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership to name a few).

The beauty of WMAs is they allow for flexible management options that the growing pressure and use of the GMUG is experiencing. While I may personally love the concept of creating new wilderness areas, we're living in a time when the rigidity of wilderness management doesn't always blend cohesively with the numerous groups working and recreating on the forest. With WMAs, the forest can keep wildlife and wildlife habitat at the forefront while still addressing hot button issues like trail and road density and motorized vs. non-motorized use. Timber sales and prescribed burning can be thoughtfully laid out and proceed with the objective of improving habitat being the main goal.

As a dedicated and diehard steward to our public lands, a hunter, an outfitter, firewood gatherer, as well as someone who takes his family out to ski, sled, bike and snowmobile on our national forests, I again voice my

support for the preferred Alternative B forest revision plan.

Thank you for your time and effort in putting a very important piece of work together for the GMUG and the current and future generations who'll be stewarding it.

Sincerely,

Adam Gall

Hotchkiss, CO