

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/22/2021 11:00:00 AM

First name: Allison

Last name: Elliot

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for taking public comment for the GMUG Forest Planning Process.

[Copied from Attachment]

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests

2250 South Main Street

Delta, CO 81416

sm.fs.gmugplanning@usda.gov

RE: Support for the conservation and Alternative D+ for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) Forest draft plan

Dear Forest Service Planners,

Thank you for inviting public comments on the Draft Plan of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests Plan Revision. The GMUG National Forests are extremely important to me and the future of the North Fork Valley and beyond.

My comments here are focused on the area north of Lake Irwin towards, including Mount Owen, Green Lake, Ruby Mountain and upper Robinson Basin all the way up to the Dyke formation and Scarp Ridge. The draft management plan does not include a non-motorized option in any of the alternatives for this area. This should be corrected to include an analysis and decision to designate a Semi-Primitive Non-Public Motorized designation in this area.

As an owner of a mining claim in the old Ruby Mining District, I have spent a lot of time here over the past 20 years. During those years motorized use dramatically increased from the occasional local to a steady stream of jeeps and ATV[s] heading up to the Green Lake basin. It was unmanaged, or poorly managed by the USFS, resulting in severe habitat destruction and extreme degradation of the road. At the moment the section of road that goes through private land is caught in legal controversy, the USFS must manage the section ABOVE the mining claims in a way that protects the resources and keeps it accessible and enjoyable for non-motorized users. This area should be designated non-motorized and semi-primitive for the following reasons:

In the years since a neighboring landowner gated the driveway I[ve] seen a substantial increase in wildlife, and there are now wildflowers growing where vehicles used to drive. Hikers are very appreciative that they can enjoy quiet use a short distance from busy Lake Irwin. While there have been conflicts between a few motorized

users and the landowner with the gate, most users realize that it is no longer tenable to have heavy traffic going up and back on an unmaintained one lane road. There are no facilities or parking designated at the ambiguous end of the road, so people used to park all over the tundra.

Winter use is also a major issue here, as snowmobilers have been encouraged to use this area despite extreme avalanche risk and the necessity to trespass over private property in order to access Ruby Mountain.

This fragile and highly scenic area at risk given the heavy use seen at Lake Irwin, which itself is very close to Crested Butte. With the increase of users coming to Lake Irwin, the pressure on the surrounding area has increased. It is only because the legal battle in regard to the gate across the access road that has protected the Green Lake basin from becoming a headache for the Forest Service while destroying the same area that people are wanting to enjoy. The USFS should work with private landowners to assure non-motorized access. This area borders wilderness and is fully deserving of strong protections. Please give this due consideration in your next round of analysis of the forest plan.

Sincerely,

Allison Elliot

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