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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for this opportunity to submit feedback on the Draft Revised Plan of the Grand Mesa Uncompahgre Gunnison National Forest. The Town of Ophir (Ophir) has been tracking the development of the plan at each stage and we have regular discussions during town meetings. I commend the Forest Service for the tremendous research, information-gathering effort and public input that has gone into this latest Plan. Ophir's identity and way of life are built upon the Forest Service lands that surround our town. I believe that our clean air, clean water and public health are directly linked to the protection of our public lands. The influence of the Forest Plan on the future of Ophir's health, well-being, economy, climate, and lifestyle cannot be understated.

I would like to provide my support for the comments and recommendations submitted by the Town of Ophir, Sheep Mountain Alliance, governments and other environmentally-concerned organizations in our region. As a citizen passionately committed toward creating a healthy and sustainable environment, I'm very interested in supporting the Forest Service in creating a Forest Plan that provides wilderness protections and recognizes our forests as invaluable carbon sequestration resources in the race to counteract climate change, critical habitat for wildlife, and that our own personal health as a human species is directly interlinked to the protection of (not extraction of) our natural resources.

Regarding the currently proposed plan, I do NOT support the Draft Revised Plan Preferred Alternative B as presented. Alternative D is preferred, however it still falls short in protecting our forests as valuable resources. My specific comments are:

? The substantial increase of suitable timber proposed in all alternatives is unacceptable. The GMUG National Forest is invaluable for conserving biological diversity, providing superb recreation opportunity in nature, and sequestering carbon sequestration to help counteract climate change and should not be considered a resource for increased timber extraction.

? I would like to see the Winter ROS of the east side of the Ophir valley changed to Semi-Primitive Non-motorized.

? I support the Wilderness Area recommendations in Alternative D and urge that those be included in the final plan.

? I strongly support the concept of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the revised forest plan and suggest that those be retained and strengthened with additional plan components.

? I support the 246,000 acres of Special Management Areas (SMAs) in Alternative D.

? Climate Change

As an energy and climate change specialist with the region's sustainability organization, I track our region's greenhouse gas emissions and analyze our progress toward reaching GHG reduction goals. Through this process and discussion with our regional Sneffels Energy Board, it has become increasingly evident that without increasing the carbon sequestration and water retention capacity of our land, we are at increasing risk of experiencing increased temperatures, drought, wildfire and will struggle to reduce our net GHG emissions. Therefore, I would like to draw attention to the concern of the "red flag" issues raised by the San Miguel, Ouray, Gunnison, and Hinsdale Counties Boards of County Commissioners (BOCC).

I support the BOCC and Town of Ophir requests that a section be included to develop a baseline for the current carbon sequestration capacity of the GMUG and a determination of the carbon emissions of projects to monitor the balance of emissions vs. sequestration. In the Draft EIS (DEIS), on Pg. 24 carbon sequestration was addressed as such, "Public feedback requested an alternative that would maximize carbon sequestration." Therefore, I request that the Plan prioritize development of a baseline for the current carbon sequestration capacity of the GMUG and that the Forest Service work in alignment with local efforts to increase the carbon sequestration capacity of our local lands while decreasing carbon emissions on Forest Service lands.

I appreciate that the draft plan contains plan components intended to guide making forest infrastructure resilient to the effects of climate changes, such as extreme weather events. Protecting and connecting undeveloped areas is an important action that agencies can take to enhance climate change adaptation. However, the draft plan's objective to identify these areas over a 10-year timeline is absolutely not soon enough to be in alignment with local and state goals to address climate change. The plan must protect and support health of the forests and not just monitor them.

Thank you for the outreach initiated by the Forest Service for collaboration of this Forest Plan Revision Process. It has allowed me as a citizen of Ophir and engaged professional of the region an opportunity to share my input to influence the planning process. The protection of Forest Service lands that surround our region is integral to our health, well-being, economy, climate, and lifestyle. I hope to see the comments above and those submitted by our regional partners integrated into the Draft Record of Decision in great detail. I look forward to the next phase in the planning process and viewing the Draft Record of Decision. Through this collaboration it is my hope that adjustments can be made to bring the plan into better alignment with regional priorities. Thank you again for the collaboration, partnership, and opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Plan.

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