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Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests

Attn: Plan Revision Team

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Dear GMUG Planning Team,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit feedback on the Draft Revised Plan of the Grand Mesa Uncompahgre Gunnison National Forest. My feedback specifically refers to the lands surrounding the Town of Ophir and the lands in and around the Ophir Valley.

I, my family and neighbors of Ophir 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 are extremely important.

I would like to provide my support for something close to Alternative D but with strong hesitation to the Winter ROS alternatives, mention of OSV in the Ophir Valley and timber sales.

Ophir is strongly committed to non-motorized use in the forestlands that surround the valley. The noise from snowmobile and OHV use in our steep valley has tremendous impacts to residents and wildlife. Ophir has a history of quiet recreation. Ophir also has a history of large, dangerous avalanches. Recreational snowmobilers travel through steep, significant avalanche terrain, and not only put themselves at risk, but at times, put themselves directly above other backcountry users on the same slope. The high valleys' above Telluride are not appropriate for snowmobiles.

Roads: All of the alternatives of the Draft Revised Land Management Plan Winter ROS GIS have the east side of Ophir Valley and Forest Road #630 (Ophir Pass), listed as "Roaded Natural". Alternative B additionally has the land north of the pass listed as "Semi-Primitive Motorized". Alternative C has both north and south of Ophir Pass listed as "Semi-Primitive Motorized" which conflicts with Town of Ophir's Source Water Protection Areas as well as proposed CORE Act protections.

Alternative D has a smaller area designated "Semi-Primitive motorized" but still has Ophir Pass designated "Roaded Natural". "Roaded Natural" is an inappropriate designation. Snowmobiles cannot safely follow the summer pass road and has not historically done so.

OSV: For winter purposes, there aren't any official designated routes in the Ophir area. There is no current travel management plan for over snow vehicles (OSV) and most residents of the town agree the Ophir Valley is not an appropriate place for OSVs.

Timber Sales: The Ophir Valley is not an appropriate place for forest thinning or timber sales. The impacts are too great on people the people of Ophir, recreationists, wildlife and the sensitive environment in this wilderness-like valley. Thinning the forest around Ophir is not a sustainable practice for many reasons including that the

current timber harvesting practices used in the local forests disturb topsoil and remove too much vegetation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be part of the GMUG planning process.

Kindly,

Natalie Fijalkowski