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Organization:

Title:

Comments: [Copied from attachment]

November 26, 2021

Dear GMUG Forrest Planning Team,

I am a full-time resident of Crested Butte/Mt. Crested Butte since 2006 (also lived here 1990-1996). I am a research hydrologist actively working in the East River Basin and enjoy trail running, mtn biking, back-country skiing. The following comments are about the GMUG Forest Plan.

1. I support current and future scientific research in the upper Gunnison Valley. As such, the corridor from Mt. Crested Butte to Schofield Pass should be excluded as a scenic byway. Inclusion will create significant problems for research and education at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory (RMBL) and several ongoing Earth science projects focused on air, land, and water sustainability. I support the special interest area designation around Gothic. Over the past several years (decade) we have seen a substantial uptick in recreational traffic along the East River corridor and this designation would help protect ongoing and future science and education in the region.
2. I support the priorities outlined by the Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association (CMBA). Specifically, I feel the following are important for sustainable recreation in our area that honors multiple stakeholders: (i) increased recreation emphasis corridors (MA-4.2) that concentrate on staked trail systems with progressive, purpose-built trails and features, directional travel, specific identified uses, (ii) incorporate the Special Management Areas identified by the Gunnison Public Lands Initiative into your final plan, (iii) identify specific areas suitable for e-bike usage and continue to keep mountain bikes in the semi-primitive non-motorized ROS setting, (iv) provide necessary infrastructure and enforcement protocol for day use recreation and camping areas, (v) eliminate additional unauthorized motorized travel routes and (vi) require "leave no trace" style over-night camping protocols (e.g. WAG bags). As a long-distance trail runner, it is amazing how much human waste I see in heavy use Wilderness zones.
3. Please add a plan for carbon footprint accounting and reduction on Forest Service lands. The revised plan should balance sustainability with technology and access through careful consideration of e-bikes, support for electric vehicles and public transportation, and an analysis of carbon emissions associated with various land use practices.
4. Please reconsider your analysis of timber suitability plan. Every alternative in the draft plan proposes a significant increase in suitable timber, which is at odds with responsible management of the forests for uses other than timber production and is likely to cause irreversible harm to watersheds already suffering from drought and the impacts of climate change. The draft plan's analysis of timber suitability does not comply with the National Forest Management Act, the Planning Rule, or Forest Service policy. As noted above, the GMUG National Forest is much more valuable for conserving biological diversity and recreation. Issues include (i) too much suitable land, (ii) areas designated as suitable are indeed unsuitable due to slope, habitat, and riparian zones.

Sincerely,

Rosemary WH Carroll