

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/25/2021 11:00:00 AM

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Comments: Comments on the Draft GMUG Revised Management Plan

Municipalities that rely on the National Forests for their source of water are vitally interested in the GMUG Management plan for their watersheds. Appendix 7, Priority Watersheds of the Revised Plan states:

The Forest Service uses the watershed condition framework to assess and characterize the health and condition of subwatersheds (6th level or 12-digit hydrologic unit code). The watershed condition framework employs a nationally consistent reconnaissance-level approach for classifying watershed condition, using a comprehensive set of 12 indicators that are surrogate variables representing the underlying ecological, hydrologic, and geomorphic functions and processes that affect watershed condition. Primary emphasis is on aquatic and terrestrial processes and conditions that Forest Service management activities can influence (USDA Forest Service 2011).

Watershed condition classification is the process of describing watershed condition in terms of discrete categories (or classes) that reflect the level of watershed health or integrity. The outcome of the classification process is to place each 6th level watershed into one of the classes described below:

- * Class 1: Watersheds that are functioning properly exhibit high geomorphic, hydrologic, and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition.
- * Class 2: Watersheds that are functioning at risk exhibit moderate geomorphic, hydrologic, and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition.
- * Class 3: Watersheds that have impaired function exhibit low geomorphic, hydrologic, and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition.

The GMUG has 242 watersheds. Of these, 163 are currently identified as class 1; 79 are identified as class 2; and no watersheds are identified as class 3. Across the plan area, watersheds were most commonly rated as impaired for the indicators: aquatic biota, roads and trails, and water quality.

As depicted in Figure 4 of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests REVISED DRAFT Forest Assessments: Watersheds, Water, and Soil Resources March 2018, significant areas on the Grand Mesa are shown to be Fair, Functioning, at Risk, i.e. Class 2.

Figure 4. GMUG Forest Assessments March 2018

Delta County Municipalities believe the GMUG Management Plan should address bringing these Class 2 areas up to Class 1 standards.

Incidentally, we attempted to obtain a higher resolution map of the Grand Mesa Forest Assessments using the same tool used to create Figure 4 above [Figure 4. GMUG Forest Assessments March 2018]; the Natural Resources Manager (NRM) Watershed Classification and Assessment Tracking Tool (WCATT). We found that the WCATT NRM web page referenced in the NRM WCATT User Guide no longer exists. We did find an application for NRM WCATT at <https://apps.fs.usda.gov/wcatt/> but found that this application relied upon Microsoft Silverlight to display the results. Silverlight is no longer supported by Microsoft and it is not possible to display the Forest Assessments.

Richard Udd, Trustee

Town of Cedaredge

And Delta County's Municipalities Representative

Gunnison Basin Roundtable