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Comments: January 5, 2024

Anthony Edwards

Deputy Forest Supervisor

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2250 South Main Street

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Submitted electronically via USFS Website

Subject: Thompson Divide Withdrawal #63679

Dear Mr. Edwards:

The Coal Creek Watershed Coalition (CCWC) strongly supports the proposed mineral withdrawal in the Thompson Divide Area which includes Mt. Emmons near Crested Butte, Colorado. As reported in the environmental assessment the withdrawal will protect water quality and wildlife. More specifically, the withdrawal will protect water quality and watershed health in the Coal Creek Watershed which serves as the municipal water supply for the Town of Crested Butte, Colorado.

Since 2004, CCWC has been dedicated to protecting and improving water quality in Crested Butte's local watersheds. In recent years, we've worked alongside several local parties and Mt Emmons Mining Company (MEMC) to reduce the environmental impacts of the Keystone Mine, permanently prohibit mining, and improve water quality.

An administrative withdrawal of the claims in the proposed action would provide the time necessary to pass the CORE Act to permanently prohibit mining on Mt. Emmons. CCWC would like the Secretary of the Interior to approve the proposed action (Alternative A) while opting to remove the lands included in the proposed Mt. Emmons Land Exchange (#61798). By removing lands included in the Mt. Emmons Land Exchange, the land exchange can be completed in a timely manner while simultaneously allowing local parties to accomplish multiple goals to protect water quality and environmental health.

CCWC appreciates the opportunity to comment in support of the Thompson Divide Withdrawal.