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First name: Jim

Last name: Cowart

Organization: Jim Cowart, P.E.

Title: Professional Engineer

Comments: Comment: Saint Vrain Forest Health Project #61372

It is recommended that the Preliminary EA address the presence of Beavers, and evaluate the Benefits and Challenges of Additional Beaver Locations, with respect to wildfire mitigation and watershed health.

Re: Colo Parks & Wildlife Benefits of Beavers

From an ecological perspective, beavers are good for watersheds. Beavers cutting aspen, willow and other trees will cause the trees to regenerate. Their dams expand the floodplain into a drainage which allows them to safely reach food further from the original stream channel. This slowing and expanding of water in the drainage, in turn increases riparian plants, which previously could only grow directly along the stream since the uplands were too dry. The Riparian is one of the more diverse habitat types in Colorado, so beavers can help improve and expand it.

Re: Literature Reference

Fairfax, E. and Whittle, A. (2020), Smokey the Beaver: beaver-dammed riparian corridors stay green during wildfire throughout the western USA. Ecol Appl. Accepted Author Manuscript. doi:10.1002/eap.2225