



## Central Colorado Mountain Riders

GMUG National Forest  
Att: Scott Armentrout, Forest Supervisor  
2250 South Main Street  
Delta, CO 81416

Re: GMUG Forest Plan comments

Dear Mr. Armentrout:

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Central Colorado Mountain Riders (CCMR). CCMR is a 501(c)3 nonprofit based in Salida, CO, that has volunteer agreements with local USFS and BLM agencies. We have adopted multiple sections of motorized trail in the Pike San Isabel National Forest and run fundraisers and trail workdays throughout the season to benefit our local motorized trails.

Our membership are frequent users of the Gunnison National Forest and regularly visit other areas within the Uncompahgre and Grand Mesa regions. Our focus is singletrack motorized trail, but we all enjoy primitive camping, mountain biking, hiking, and over snow use as well.

As the GMUG begins the Forest Planning process, we would like to submit these comments on behalf of our club.

- 1) The Forest Plan should expressly state the need for partnership with surrounding communities and the need for the Forest to promote uses which economically benefit the region.

For an example of how this can be done, please refer to the 1996 Rio Grande NF plan, Forestwide objectives 7 and 8. These objectives operationalize the USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan for FY 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives E (Strengthen Communities) and F- (Connect people to the outdoors).

Further, in this era of shrinking Federal budgets and increasing use, the Forest must recognize the potential for cooperative management, and partnership should be specifically set as an objective in the Forest Plan. In particular, the forest plan should set the stage for the Forest to encourage

local communities and user groups to invest and have ownership and pride in their forest.

Although outside the scope of forest plan revision, the forest should strive to sign volunteer agreements with responsible groups and grant trail adoption requests wherever possible. Our experience has been that the GMUG has been difficult for volunteer groups to work with, and that cements a resource drain for the forest and an unnecessarily antagonistic relationship with users.

- 2) The Forest Plan should recognize current trends and extrapolate how they will impact the region over the next decades and generations.

OHV use has been increasing in recent years, and some locations in the GMUG area have been used and overused as the combination of looping trails and camping opportunities combine to create very popular rides. Without getting into detailed Travel Management, the landscape-level prescriptions for land use in the Forest Plan should recognize the possibility of and need for improved recreational loops and camping opportunities in order to disperse use and lessen natural resource impacts.

In addition, it is highly likely that electric bicycles and motorcycles will become prevalent within the lifespan of the new Forest Plan. The Forest must consider whether silent OHVs would change appropriate use of trails and make sure that the Forest Plan does not create a problem for future management of these evolving uses. We recommend that prescriptions focus on acceptable levels of resource impacts, not on the specific equipment.

- 3) Additional Wilderness is not consistent with the need to manage a changing landscape and growing use of the Forest.

While the Forest Plan process will be required to evaluate areas to recommend for Wilderness protection, we submit that the current level of Wilderness protection is sufficient, and recommending additional acreage for designation will have a negative impact on remaining non-Wilderness areas by excessively focusing use on them. Many forest users do not venture into Wilderness, and the argument that Wilderness is an economic engine for surrounding communities is debatable. A recent study sponsored by COHVCO has shown the economic contributions of OHV use across Colorado, and additional Wilderness precludes these benefits.

CCMR looks forward to being involved in the GMUG Forest Plan process, and is hopeful that this process represents an opportunity to set the Forest on a path for

success in coming decades. Our observation is that all kinds of outdoor use, and especially motorized use, is growing rapidly, and the Forest must be responsive to that demand by offering responsible and sustainable opportunities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ned Suesse', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ned Suesse  
Land Use Officer, CCMR

[centralcoloradomountainriders@gmail.com](mailto:centralcoloradomountainriders@gmail.com)  
<http://centralcoloradomountainriders.com>