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Organization: Meridian Lake Park Corporation Board of Managers

Title: vice president

Comments: This note is from the Meridian Lake Park Corporation Homeowner's Association Board of Managers. We are sending this to you in response to your request for input during the Assessment phase of the revision of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forest Plan.

We are the Board for the Meridian Lake Park Subdivision, located in Washington Gulch in unincorporated Gunnison County.

The decisions made by the USFS on how and where activities are allowed and mitigated on public lands are especially important to our constituents.

Our homes are located between the towns of Crested Butte and Mount Crested Butte on Gunnison County Road #811, which bisects our subdivision. County Road #811, is the most used, year-round access and the only winter access to USFS lands in Washington Gulch, including Snodgrass Mountain, Long Lake, and other GMUG public lands managed by the USFS in the vicinity.

Much of our subdivision is bordered by public lands managed by the USFS. Accordingly, we have a vested interest in the management of the public lands that are in proximity to the homes of our constituents. The impacts from users of these lands have a direct and profound impact on our daily lives.

We request that the USFS consider the impacts to the residents of Meridian Lake Park with regards to water quality, noise, dust, air quality, traffic, parking, visual impacts, socioeconomic influences, and quality of life arising from all of the users of the public lands in the vicinity of our homes while conducting analyses for the GMUG Forest Plan update.

We would like the revision of the GMUG Forest Plan to include identification of impacts from, and mitigation for the huge increase of users in traditional types of uses. These include rangeland management and grazing, dispersed camping, hiking, mountain climbing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, snowmobiling, hunting and fishing, and cross country skiing.

Since 1983 when the last Forest Plan revision was completed and approved, many new types of uses have also impacted public lands in Washington Gulch. These include back country skiing and associated snowmobiling, mountain biking including fat tire winter biking, motorcycles including 'dirt bikes' and 'timber-sleds', ORVs including Razors and ATVs, stand up paddle boarding and kayaking on Long Lake, and the changes seen in dispersed camping transitioning from tents to full-sized RV's and motorhomes.

The recent seasonal closure of dispersed camping in the Gothic Valley has caused a very large influx of campers in Washington Gulch. The impacts from increases and types of camping to our community are significant. The recent improvements in Washington Gulch by the USFS to limit dispersed camping are a very good start to addressing the impacts from the unprecedented increase in users of the public lands in Washington Gulch that we have witnessed. Signage and closing of some unsanctioned roads is a start to address the impacts of these increased numbers, but it is only a start. As the GMUG Forest Plan update process moves forward, we will have additional comments and suggestions.

These comments and our future substantive formal comments will provide us standing for objecting to the draft decision should that be necessary. Please include us on your email list at robin.smith71@icloud.com.

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Thank you,
Robin Smith
Vice President
Board of Managers
Meridian Lake Park Corporation