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Organization:

Title:

Comments: GMUG Forest Plan Revision

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests

Attn: Plan Revision

2250 South Main St.

Delta, CO 81418

Dear Colleagues:

I am a scientist who has worked for well over 40 years at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory. I attended the workshop you held in Gunnison last summer and have reviewed the information posters you have posted.

I am impressed by the magnitude of this long-overdue process and thank you for undertaking it!

There are a few thoughts that I would like to offer about the planning process.

I notice that your Designated Areas poster does not recognize one category that I hope you will consider adding: a special designation for the upper East River Valley near Gothic that recognizes its scientific value. Generations of scientists working through the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory have collected invaluable long-term data about the health of the ecosystems in that area (as well as throughout the GMUG). It was my understanding that some sort of prioritization of areas of scientific value was one of the top priorities that emerged from previous planning efforts. I encourage you to reinstate this as a priority in the current planning effort.

One reason RMBL should receive consideration is that there has been a very large federal and public investment in research conducted through RMBL. RMBL has one of the largest annual budgets for research that is supported by NSF, DOE, and NIH, among other agencies, and one of the world's largest collections of long-term biological data. Please consider seriously how best to steward the investment that has already been made.

Another reason some sort of special designation is needed for the Upper East River Valley is the dramatic recent increase in public recreation in the area. If not managed, recreational use of this area can compromise its value for research. If well managed, RMBL represents a valuable resource for public nature education: already the RMBL visitor's center informs 10s of thousands of visitors each summer.

Public-private partnerships have considerable potential in generating scientific knowledge that guides management. I encourage you to explicitly consider taking advantage of opportunities presented by RMBL for such partnerships. RMBL attracts top-notch researchers and would serve as an unparalleled resource for your research needs.

Please consider, in your planning, that the USFS has fewer personnel than it used to have, which creates difficulties for implementing plans and for enforcing them. Again, one useful strategy to overcome this constraint could involve some sort of public-private arrangement.

Finally, RMBL provides a valuable resource for your planning process and would be happy to assist. RMBL scientists have considerable knowledge about pollinators, stream and pond ecosystems, climate change, and

invasive organisms. Please let us know how we can help!

Sincerely,

Mary V. Price

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