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First name: Janice

Last name: Shepherd

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Draft Assessment - consist numbers please

Hi,

I appreciate the hard work that went into preparing these draft assessments. Clearly a lot of details were pulled together and analyzed to make these assessments. I'm learning a lot by looking through them. Thanks.

When preparing the assessments it is important the team have access to a consistent set of numbers for important numbers like the GMUG total acreage and acreage per GMUG unit. Were a consistent set of numbers used by all members of the assessment team? I hope so.

Members of the public who read the documents will have a better understanding of acreage quoted in the assessment documents (whether it is number of acres of fen, grazing allotment acres or whatever) if they can readily compare it with the size of each forest unit and the total size of GMUG.

So it would be very useful (to the public and the forest planning team) if each of the assessment documents started with an identical paragraph that stated the names of National Forests covered and the number of acres of each and the total number of acres being assessed. Modern technology should allow for a more accurate acreage assessment than was previously available but I imagine some rounding will still be expected.

But it appears that the authors of the different assessments might be using quite different GMUG total acreage.

I tried to figure out the "total" acreage of GMUG and so far I have found quite a variety for the "total" acreage of GMUG.

For example on

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/gmug/about-forest> it is 2.9 million acres

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/gmug> it is 3,161,900 acres

https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3829778.pdf it is 2.97 million acres

The range management assessment document seems to be using 2,570,011 as the total acreage (divided between active allotments, unassigned allotments, and acres either closed or not suitable to grazing). The watershed assessment document seems to be using at least 3,605,270 acres (adding the acres listed in Table 11).

I started on the quest of knowing the total acreage because I came to the comment in the recreation assessment that the number of acres of wilderness in GMUG is: 553,427. Which is different from the number 498,152 quoted on GMUG's website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gmug/specialplaces/?cid=stelprdb5180674> Where did the extra 55,275 acres come from? Which number is correct?

By the way, I would have thought that the assessments are aimed at reporting facts and not advocating specific agendas. The description in the rec assessment "nearly 20 percent of the total acreage of the Forest" (page 2) sounds to me that the writer is implying that is already sufficient or too many acres. While the website I quoted just presents the facts with the more unbiased and specific description "making up nineteen percent of the three-million acre forest". If you don't see "nearly 20 percent" as sounding biased, consider if the text in the assessment document had stated instead "not even 1/5th of the total acreage" - same information but the opposite tone. So I believe switching to a factual description would be more appropriate for the recreation assessment document. Note the rec assessment should have mentioned that there are 0 acres in the Uncompaghre Plateau Forest and 0 acres in the Grand Mesa Forest.

While we are discussing numbers ... it seems that the number of visitors to GMUG annually seems to also be quite varied:

The recreation assessment lists 2,274,000 (Table 14).

But the websites give different numbers:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3829778.pdf for 2104 2.285 million visitors

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/gmug/about-forest> approx 3.4 million visitors (Yikes that 3.4 million estimate would suggest we've had 1.2 million visitor increase in 3 years! That's a 50% increase.)

Note the 2,274,000 number in Table 14 of the recreation assessment document is listed as "Annual National Forest visits" so at first I thought this was the number for all National Forests vs just GMUG. But then that number would have been too small. "Annual GMUG Forest visits" would be a clearer label.

Regards,

Janice Shepherd

