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Title: Chairperson (MUT Chapter), Board Member

Comments: To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Montrose-Uncompahgre Trail (MUT) Chapter of the Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA) and submitting comments on the GMUG National Forest Draft Assessment Report released on November 6th, 2017.

The data in the report shows a substantial increase in nonmotorized recreation of the past several years. In fact, 80% of GMUG summer activity is nonmotorized, and both mountain biking and hiking participation each increased from 1% in 2009 to 6% in 2014. These large increases in nonmotorized activity occurred while motorized recreation stayed steady at 5%.

In light of these trends, the Uncompahgre Plateau currently is lacking quality trail experiences for nonmotorized users. The vast majority of trails in this section of the GMUG are motorized. These trails, while open to mountain bikes and other nonmotorized users, are not enjoyable or sought out by these users because they are not quiet, are not loops (they require either out and back routes or riding on a road) and large sections of the trails are eroded and have steep, unsustainable grades.

We feel that, given the relatively uncrowded nature of the Uncompahgre Plateau, it is well suited to handle an expansion of nonmotorized trails to accommodate the increase in nonmotorized visitors. In addition, the existing motorized trails should have their unsustainable sections rerouted and loops could be created. As other areas of the GMUG become more crowded the Uncompahgre Plateau could handle this trail expansion well and relieve crowding and potential trail conflicts in the other areas. As the least crowded section of the GMUG, the Uncompahgre Plateau is also well suited for quiet, nonmotorized use.

Trail conflicts among nonmotorized users is a concern raised in the report. The Buzzard Gulch system in Montrose on BLM land on the Uncompahgre Plateau is a newer nonmotorized trail system that is open to horses, mountain bikes and hikers. This new trail system has been very popular with all types of users with very little conflict between user groups, and can serve as an example of a successful multi-use trail system with little user conflict.

In summary, we feel the Uncompahgre Plateau section of the GMUG is not serving the needs of the predominant users of the forest; nonmotorized users. In the past, hunting and motorized use may have dominated this area, but this report clearly shows that these are no longer the most common uses and will not be in the future. The Plateau's uncrowded nature makes it a prime area for expansion of nonmotorized trails which would divert users away from more crowded areas of the GMUG and help decrease user conflict.

Sincerely,

Renata Raziano

Chairperson, Montrose-Uncompahgre Trails (MUT) Chapter

Board Member, Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA)