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Title:

Comments: GMUG Forest Plan - Assessment Comments

Dear GMUG Forest Planning Team:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments during the assessment phase of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forest plan revision process. As an avid outdoor enthusiast, I enjoy recreating on the GMUG and hope to preserve opportunities for human-powered backcountry travel, solitude, challenge and exploration throughout the National Forest.

In reviewing the Recreation Assessment, I was disappointed to see this important topic receive a fairly cursory overview with limited detail included in the assessment. The narrative was incomplete without maps to portray the recreation amenities, trails, high-use areas and visitor use data.

Activities that take place off-trail, such as rock climbing, backcountry skiing and boating are hardly mentioned in the Recreation Assessment, yet the GMUG is home to world-class opportunities and frequented by locals and visitors seeking these types of recreation. We understand that it is difficult to capture data on these types of recreation but we hope you acknowledge their importance and seek to gather more input from these user groups throughout the planning process.

It is very challenging to assess the current trends in recreation with adequate maps to show the described Geographic Areas and the associated activities taking place in those areas - please incorporate comprehensive maps into any future reports and analysis and make them available on the planning website.

Please clarify that there are in fact six 14ers located on the forest (Uncompahgre, Wetterhorn, Castle, San Luis, Sneffles, Wilson).

If there is demand for increased trail-based recreation opportunities (both motorized and non-motorized) there will be an increased maintenance burden on the forest which needs to be incorporated into all levels of planning - please include trail maintenance as a Key Issue for Recreation on the GMUG

Please incorporate more inventory data regarding high-use dispersed camping areas into future analysis

Winter Recreation

The entire GMUG will need to undergo more rigorous and comprehensive Winter Travel Management planning after the forest plan is complete and we will be eager to review the Winter ROS inventory and subsequent Over-Snow Vehicle Suitability analysis included in this forest plan revision process.

Increased winter recreation and associated parking limitations near trailheads was identified as a concern by the public - please describe these concerns or issue areas in more detail.

Please describe what constitutes a "Snowpark" developed recreation site and include a map of where they are located on the forest.

Several backcountry hut and yurt operators utilize forest service land and permits and their status and use patterns should be reflected in the assessment.

Winter recreation is under-represented as a common use in the Gunnison and San Juan Geographic Areas.

please address the idea of paying for parking at each trailhead or where ever folks are parking. Keep this money in that USFS budget, not sent to Washington.

I hope you will consider updating the information in your assessment report to provide a more detailed picture of Recreation on the GMUG forest prior to the scoping period.

Sincerely,

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