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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am a 10 year resident of Montrose and recreate on public lands in Western Colorado. I am a mountain biker, cross country skier and hunter. I read the GMUG draft assessment and have the following comments:

1.As a mountain biker, it is extremely disappointing to me that there are so few quality opportunities for me on the Uncompahgre Plateau. I live west of Montrose and can reach the National Forest boundary in less than 30 minutes from my door but, like many other people in the region, I instead spend a good amount of time in the summer driving almost 2 hours to Crested Butte to bike on their wonderful trails. When I first came to Montrose, Buck trail was rideable for mountain bikers but now has become so eroded that it requires a good amount of hike-a-bike and is no longer enjoyable. I also used to ride Clear Creek trail at least once a year but the dirt bike use and steep grades have combined to make it extremely rocky and even dangerous in parts on a mountain bike. Aspen trail has degraded as well with deeper ruts and more erosion, and is the only singletrack that I currently ride in that area. Ridgway and Ouray are closer than Crested Butte, but they also lack good trails for mountain biking in the National Forest. Dallas Trail is probably the best in that region but also suffers from steep grades and hike a bikes.

2.The Uncompahgre Plateau is beautiful and uncrowded and would be an ideal place to divert nonmotorized users. While I love the trails at Crested Butte, I tire of having to start my ride at 6am to not run into the 200 other people on 401 or Snodgrass trail that day. Most mountain bikers are seeking a quiet, uncrowded trail experience and there is a lot of potential for this on the Plateau. I disagree with your categorization of mountain bikers as mostly desiring "thrilling descents". What I and most of my riding partners desire is a good workout in a natural environment away from the stresses of work and daily life. If I want thrilling descents, I ride downhill only trails at bike parks, of which there are numerous in the state. I do not risk injuring other trail users or myself with reckless riding.

3.Given the increase in nonmotorized use as outlined in your report, it is clear the GMUG and especially the Uncompahgre Plateau section are not serving the needs of its users. While there are many trails on the Plateau that are open to mountain bikes, the reality is they are not suitable for mountain bikes and so are not being used by us. I find it very disheartening to live so close to such beautiful public land only to spend hours on the highway on the weekends to go to other, more crowded public land to ride my bike.