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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Forest plan revision

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Dear Forest Plan Revision Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Scoping process of the GMUG Forest Plan Revision.

Much has changed since the Forest Plan was last revised. Historically it seems that recreation has taken a back seat to agriculture and extraction, at least in the Gunnison Forest. I believe that recreation needs to have the same emphasis in the Forest Plan if it is to be a successful, progressive working document.

My comments are in direct response to the GMUG Scoping document.

GMUG SCOPING: Locals and visitors to the GMUG enjoy high-quality hiking and trail running

I couldn't agree more. High-quality is a key word here, as the quality gets diluted as user numbers increase. Take trail 401 as an example. Great trail, and I mt bike on it all the time. Although its open to hikers/runners, no one in their right mind would consider hiking on it mid-summer, unless it was at 5am, as there are too many bikers on it.

Some thought will have to be given to specific uses/times as our valley and population grows.

GMUG SCOPING: Contribute to Social and Economic Sustainability

Provide people and communities with a range of social and economic benefits for present and future generations...Consider a landscape-scale strategy to provide adequate motorized recreation opportunities as well as acceptable levels of noise heard within non-motorized areas.

As a quiet user, I support landscape scale areas of non-motorized and motorized in the forest. In busy areas close to town, mixed use does not work for quiet users who are seeking a different experience from motorized users. Having the two uses together is like trying to mix oil and water. I strongly support a strategy where the quiet user enjoys solitude in the absence of motorized noise.

If the plan is seriously concerned about sustainability, then non-motorized use is clearly more sustainable than motorized. That fact should be taken into account.

GMUG SCOPING: Recreation Focus Areas/High-Use Recreation Emphasis

Overall management emphasis is on providing a high-quality recreation opportunity for a moderate/high volume of users.

Again, I this idea of high-quality recreation simply does not exist in a moderate/high volume situation of users unless there is a clear separation of some of the uses, like motorized and non-motorized. I would take that a step further and say the same thing about bikers/hikers. When a given trail or area hits a tipping point of use, it tends to drive other users away.

Classic examples are heavy motorized use driving skiers out of a drainage. Trail 401 in the summer-bikers driving hikers out simply because there is too much use.

So much could and should be done to enhance and protect the area around Crested Butte. First off, enforcement of the law would be a great start. We should not have side by sides/razors on our County roads illegally. We should adopt the Aspen side management of closing our FS roads during the day and run buses to the trailheads. While this seems excessive, I don't think it is at all. It's being ahead of the curve, instead of behind it. We are already at that point, and by the time we implement a plan like that, we will be more than ready for it.

Thanks for planning efforts. I know it is a monumental task, but much needed too. Best wishes getting through it.

Keith

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