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First name: Enno

Last name: Heuscher

Organization:

Title:

Comments: mountain lion as an at-risk species

Appreciated the fact that the mountain lion (Puma) is listed as an at-risk species in the Pinyon-Juniper habitat. Appreciated the fact that climate change is being considered for all forest habitats, and its potential future consequences. I would add the mountain lion as an at-risk species on riparian habitats as well, because overgrazing esp. by mule deer in riparian habitats degrades the stream quality dramatically as well as riparian resiliency and sustainability. The presence of mountain lions in the riparian areas has proven to reduce riparian degradation by ungulates, as they avoid these areas except to get water. Additionally, the mountain lions tend to go after the weaker of the ungulates, thus strengthening the genetics of the surviving ungulates, and likely allowing a strengthening of the remaining deer herd. Thus, the forest service plan should have a strong stance to not allow significant hunting or extermination of mountain lion in the GMUG unless significant overpopulation can be proven. This stance should be clearly outlined in the plan so as to prevent Parks and Wildlife from overextending their influence to change forest plans w.r.t. the mountain lion population.

Enno F. Heuscher, Co-Chair Public Lands Partnership  
Stanford University Graduate with a major in Biology/Ecology

p.s. these comments are based on personal opinion and personal experience only