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First name: Mark

Last name: Meeks

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Scoping Comment

Dear Supervisor Armentrout and the GMUG planning team:

Please accept this scoping comment on my behalf as an activist with Conservation Colorado, an environmental advocacy organization with over 36,000 members in all parts of Colorado.

I have lived in Colorado for over 40 years primarily because of its national lands and beautiful landscape. I see wildlife on a daily basis, unlike other places where I have lived. I enjoy outings in an abundance of choice places. We have close contact with life centuries old. But that only continues if we protect and preserve this great natural beauty, held largely by our national lands.

The GMUG forest plan revision is an important moment to prioritize conservation on the forest and thus defend these great national lands. A changing climate will require adaptive measures to increase the forest's resiliency, but the forest itself is an important carbon sink, and the climate change impacts and benefits of the forest should be in the plan.

Recreation is an important value on the forest. Please assure that there is a spectrum of sustainable recreational opportunity on the forest and that human-powered recreational forms receive attention. Please plan for recreation in ways that reflect impacts of recreation on wildlife.

Many communities, as well as the great Gunnison and Colorado River systems have their headwaters in the GMUG. Please take care in the plan to safeguard municipal watershed areas, like Kannah Creek on Grand Mesa. In general, please take heightened care of headwaters areas of the forest. We are all utterly dependent on our water and how we protect the supply of it.

Finally, the forest service should elevate deserving wild lands to Recommended Wilderness status. The public values conservation of wilderness lands, and the GMUG possesses some exemplary ones including Kelso Mesa, lands proposed for wilderness in the San Juan Mountains wilderness, and many others as reflected in the conservation community's recommended wilderness proposal. Nothing protects and preserves better than wilderness.

Thanks for the opportunity to add my voice to the many people in Colorado who value the GMUG, and thank you for your thoughtful stewardship of our public lands!

Sincerely,

Mark Meeks  
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