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Organization:

Title:

Comments: GMUG Forest Plan Revision - Scoping Comments

Dear GMUG Forest Planning Team:

I'm a Colorado resident and have chosen to work and play here in this beautiful state because of the numerous outdoor activities available, and the beauty of our natural environment. I'm a year-round outdoor enthusiast who hikes, climbs, bikes, skis, snowshoes, etc. I enjoy exploring all over the state, including within and around the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, Gunnison National Forest.

Recreation is a key social and economic driver on the GMUG National Forest and I would like to see recreation addressed pro-actively through the Forest Planning process. Through Wilderness and special area designations, the Forest can protect and enhance recreation experiences for users and ensure these landscapes remain intact for future generations.

There is a need and opportunity for additional wilderness, Wild & Scenic Rivers, and other designated areas on the GMUG. Designations in the Citizens' Wilderness Proposal (<https://www.gmugrevision.com/>) and Gunnison Public Lands Initiative (<http://gunnisonpubliclands.org/>) should both be included in the revised forest plan.

In addition to locals like myself, visitors and the recreational tourism they bring help contribute to local economies and is growing rapidly. Promoting sustainable, recreation-based jobs that attract young and diverse residents is a key to Colorado's economic future. The revised plan needs to address recreation so that it is fiscally, ecologically, and socially sustainable, including sizing the infrastructure so that the Forest Service can afford to maintain it well while planning for settings compatible with the forest's recreational niche.

I'd also like to see key areas for human powered winter recreation protected to minimize impacts to sensitive snowscapes and winter habitats and to reduce user conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users. There's nothing better than a quiet winter outing, and having areas where motorized travel is not allowed offers these opportunities for growing numbers of winter back country skiers and snowshoers of all types while protecting wilderness areas.

Summer trails and recreation sites are heavily used and in dire need of maintenance. Coordination with groups of active volunteers in local communities are able and willing to help with this type of work, and planning for how best to incorporate their support, and how to coordinate and execute with volunteer help would be a useful part of the planning process.

Wild, roadless lands on the GMUG are essential to wildlife conservation, & recreation. Habitat fragmentation is a threat to all species, both on land and in water. Habitat corridors for migration and movement must be mapped and preserved. Roads, which facilitate the spread of invasive weeds and degrade water quality, must be minimized and maintained appropriately. Landscape-level conservation is critical as it allows the forest to adapt to changes in a more effective way than heavy-handed management ever could.

Thanks for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Joy Cipoletti

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