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Comments:

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Re: GMUG Forest Plan Revision

Dear Planning Team,

Thank you for your efforts, and for this chance to comment. These comments are my own and do not represent, nor should they reflect upon, any group or organization.

I am in favor of the GPLI citizen plan, and also support HCCA et al.'s suggestions for additional roadless lands disposition, particularly the Cochetopa Hills area, a place I've long thought should get some protective status.

The reasons I am in favor of protecting remaining roadless lands as reflected in these citizen-led plans is two-fold. First, I reference my previous comments regarding what the literature shows to be the psychological importance of silence, solitude, and a sense of wildness for human psychological well being. Adding more industrial activities like gas drilling will bring numerous short- and long-term impacts. Creation of more roads from these projects leads directly to erosion of these qualities needed for human health.

Second, there is a growing body of research which indicates that as climate change really takes hold in the West, larger contiguous blocks of unroaded lands will lead to greater chances of success for public lands management, if we define success as the conditions maintained that foster the greatest resiliency and preserve the greatest options for species, and for future agency management.

Roaded lands tend to be ecologically fragmented and more fire-prone. They begin to lose rare or endemic species, and become just another home for wide-ranging generalists. Unroaded lands, particularly those that add protected elevational gradients such as around Dillon Pinnacles, are key to providing the habitat diversity to encourage healthy herd movements, and protect winter range.

Finally, the GMUG needs to do more monitoring, and more law enforcement. Monitoring needs to happen just about everywhere, but particularly to update records for old timber cuts and grazing allotments so the data is useable. Going forward, the GMUG should find the money to implement an aggressive monitoring program. Similarly, the GMUG really needs more LEOs, again to monitor what is happening on the Forest, and to maintain a presence in an increasingly busy Forest environment.

Thank you for the chance to comment.

Sandy Shea