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Comments: We moved back to Cedaredge in 2006 because of Grand Mesa. What makes the Grand Mesa National Forest grand? It is that it is open to the public to enjoy. I live in the Grand Mesa Resort Company and everyday I am fortunate to enjoy the beauty of Grand Mesa. Whether I am hiking, jogging, biking, ATVing, fishing, elk hunting, ice fishing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing or skiing, I am always amazed at what this mountain has to offer. It is a joy to see the open range cattle, the elk, deer, eagles, fox, coyotes, other wildlife, and of course the fish! What is even nicer is that we have enough acreage, so we do not have to segregate the Grand Mesa into special units. If anything, we should open more of the old trails that were put here by our ancestors and the water users. Long before there were forest service management plans, Grand Mesa was used by the local people for hunting, grazing, logging, fishing, hiking and recreation. Grand Mesa is what makes our surrounding communities extraordinary. It is driving economic factor in the area. Why do people feel they need to compartmentalize everything and put everything in its place. Let us all share this grand mountain together. 90% of my time on Grand Mesa, I do not run into other people on the trails. I have a better chance of seeing elk, bear and deer while ATVing and hiking or coyotes and moose while snowmobiling than I do of seeing other people.

Please keep the new plan simple. If you keep it simple you will have less "red tape" to work through in the future. It will make it easier for us, the public land owner, to be involved in future determinations.

As I stated earlier, instead of limiting trails, closing trails or creating wilderness and special management units, more of the back country should be opened to the public. These trails were originally put in place by the residents of the area decades and even over a century ago. If the Forest Service does not have the manpower to maintain them, let the trail users maintain them. The trails are currently maintained by funds from our vehicle registration fees and volunteer clubs and CPW anyway. If funding is an issue, why are bicycles, hikers, Nordic skiers and snowshoers not required to purchase a registration permit to utilize our trails? I say no to more wilderness on Grand Mesa and in the GMUG. With over 3.5 million acres of wilderness in Colorado, do not revisit creating more wilderness. Previously Congress released Grand Mesa from wilderness consideration. Do not waste your funds to revisit this. Also there is no support for citizen wilderness and proposed Legislation in other parts of the GMUG, such as, San Juan Wilderness Legislation. This has been a non-issue for the past 5 years and has now resurfaced.

Infrastructure, such as, public restrooms are lacking on Grand Mesa. There is a steady stream of people wanting to use the bathrooms at Alexander Lake Lodge all year long. The tourists are then irritated when told the bathrooms are only for customers. People do not understand holding tanks and septic systems. They think plumbing is something for free. If the forest service can not afford to put outhouses out in the heavy car traffic areas of the forest, possibly pay toilets would help to defer the cost?

I personally know that the Grand Mesa forest is in poor health. Between the beetle and the aging trees, it is only a matter of time before all of the trees end up horizontal or in a forest fire. Please create a more proactive plan for ongoing logging to clean up the forest. Create a plan so it does not take so long to move on an idea when it is deemed necessary for forest health. It took way to many years to start fighting the beetle infestation. Poor forest health is be bad for wildlife and downed trees are also a safety issue for recreationalists.

Also, there should be no exclusionary corridors around the National Trail Systems. Most of the route that make up the American Discovery Trail, which crosses Grand Mesa, is either roads, ATV trails or Snowmobile trails. These were motorized areas before they were part of the ADT. I meet a few people each year that wander into the Grand Mesa Resort Company while walking across America. They are all impressed with Grand Mesa and none of them ever tell me they want to see it turned into wilderness. I sometimes take them on a pro bono tour of

Grand Mesa so they can see more of it, and they all enjoy their ATV tour.

I believe that we can all work together to enjoy Grand Mesa without blocking out groups of users. I believe that education and communication are key. I have run into hikers on bridges built by ATV Clubs for ATV users and basically been told to get my ATV off the bridge. Non motorized tourists do not necessarily understand who built the trails and who pays to use them.

In decades previous the Nordic Council and the Snowmobile Clubs were able to work together to devise a plan for winter usage. I believe Grand Mesa is large enough that we are not in each others way. As I said, I use the trail systems and also hike through the forest off trail year around and rarely run into another person.

Keep Grand Mesa Grand. Enforce the rules and regulations that we have regarding registrations, camping, road traffic and trail usage. We do not need more regulations.

Sincerely,

Donna Ankenbauer

Grand Mesa Adventures

Grand Mesa Resort Company