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First name: Samuel

Last name: Myers

Organization:

Title:

Comments: For the past 18 years I have been spending substantial amounts of time in and around Crested Butte in general and in the Slate River Valley more specifically in both winter and summer. We own a home up the Slate River Valley in the old Pittsburg townsite and hiked and skiied in the area for many years before we bought the home.

In particular I want to comment on the extraordinarily high wilderness value of area G5-N from the Schuylkill ridge down to the Slate River. I have spent countless hours hiking on top of Schuylkill ridge and have personally observed several large herds of elk of over 100 animals/herd shedding all along the top of the ridge line and ranging down to the river for water and forage. I have watched black bears wading in the Slate River and observed moose in the river bottoms as well. I have seen a resurgence of the beavers and their dams are creating new ecosystems in the valley floor that are attracting song birds and creating protected habitat for countless other animals. I have observed pine martens playing, arctic hares, weasels, and mink and countless owls and raptors, and all the more common birds and mammals. I believe this is a pristine and enormously rich ecozone and an important resource for wildlife that are being squeezed in many other nearby areas by increasing motorized traffic and mountain biking. Protecting G5-N with its high wilderness potential would be of tremendous value to local species and would create a legacy for our children and grandchildren to experience an ecosystem in the state God meant it to be in.