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Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a user and a business owner on Grand Mesa, please consider my comments.

I believe that enough public lands in Colorado are already designated Wilderness. I do not even understand why the Forest Service would need to turn more of our public land into roadless or wilderness areas.

The GMUG Wilderness evaluation fails to provide information regarding federal legislative conclusions and other uses weighing against designating the area as Wilderness. You failed to mention that there are groomed, marked and or maintained motorized winter trails in many of the areas that you inventoried for Wilderness.

Grand Mesa has been utilized by the local people since 1880, prior to there being a National Forest! Please do not create Wilderness or designate roadless areas for the vocal few, who probably have never even been to Grand Mesa or experienced it as I have in all seasons of the year. As a business owner, I experience the joy of taking people on ATV and snowmobile tours each year. The people who we take out, absolutely love the experience. They enjoy seeing the Grand Mesa, the distance we are able to travel, the wildlife, the flowers, the trees and the vistas. Just read the reviews on trip advisor for Grand Mesa Adventures and you will see how they love to experience Grand Mesa, without being required to hike or just looking from a view point on the highway.

If anything, we need more 50" ATV trails in the area, as explained in the comments submitted by the Western Slope ATV Club. Please leave our winter access as is, but allow the Delta SnoKruisers to mark additional trails to assist riders from getting lost. The motorized recreational users provide a large financial boost to our economy. Do not turn away the users of our public lands by creating Wilderness and roadless areas.

Now to add some boilerplate statements, encase no one else has submitted them:

1. Forest Service Handbook 1909.12 §72.1(5)(c) mandates managers must evaluate specific federal laws relevant to the availability of the area as "Wilderness". Congressional action on GMUG planning area has included extensive discussions of why particular Wilderness area boundaries are in a particular location. The previous release of an area or reasoning for a Congressionally drawn boundary are federal law and at no point are these actions even mentioned in the inventory despite this information being highly relevant to the availability of the area for future designation.

2. In the 1980 and 1993 Colorado Wilderness Acts, Congress mandated no buffer areas around Fossil Ridge, Collegiate Peaks, Uncompahgre, Powderhorn and Raggeds Wilderness areas but this restriction on Wilderness designation is omitted in the inventory. Many parcels such as G14, G15, and G24 which are adjacent to these Wilderness areas identify the parcels ability to serve as a buffer to the adjacent Wilderness areas as a positive factor for listing without even mentioning the Congressional restriction on buffers.

3. Pursuant to section 101 of the 1980 Colorado Wilderness Act, lands on the GMUG not previously designated were to be made available for non-wilderness multiple use. Clearly that is a provision of federal law that is relevant to the availability of lands for future designations. This provision and areas subject to such a restriction is never mentioned in the inventory.

4. The entire GMUG was inventoried for possible designation as upper tier roadless areas in 2012 and a significant portion of the GMUG was declined for this lower level of designation. This reasoning for not listing is clearly an existing right that must be addressed under handbook section 72.1(5)(b). Failure to address these conclusions opens the door for possible identification of areas as recommended Wilderness in the RMP that

were recently identified as unsuitable for Upper Tier designation.

5. While Managers fail to recognize previous Congressional Action and extensive USFS inventory for possible upper tier roadless designations on the GMUG inventory and evaluation processes, Gunnison Public Lands Initiative is recognized for evaluation, despite the fact there has been no analysis of level of support and no Congressional action whatsoever regarding this proposal. How did managers determine GPLI was suitable for inclusion in the plan while previous Congressional action was not?

6. We are completely unaware of a "Citizens Conservation Proposal" Wilderness for the GMUG. Land managers need to explain what this document even is, how it was vetted and found sufficient to move forward in the evaluation and inventory process before listing it on the inventory mapping for the Forest.

Thank you for considering my comments.