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First name: Jennifer

Last name: Reithel

Organization: Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory

Title: Science Director

Comments: Dear Forest Service,

I am the Science Director at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory (RMBL); a world-renowned scientific laboratory established in 1928 and located in Gothic Colorado. We are a hub of scientific field research, with nearly 200 scientists annually conducting research at 3000 field sites. The world is changing. RMBL science provides foundational information about the environment. In order to manage for change and protect resources where it matters, we need to understand the ecosystems that replenish the world's air, water, and food supplies. This is what we do at RMBL. We do science to understand the natural world.

I am writing to express my support for the new wild and scenic river designations, with one caveat. I am supportive of the new designation, as long as there is no conflict with our ability to continue to conduct historic research on the Copper Creek. This creek is proposed to be designated 'wild'. We have been conducting important historic research on this creek for decades. Historic datasets are invaluable for detecting changes in the environment. As long as we are able to continue collecting important scientific information on the Copper Creek and in the Copper Creek drainage, I am supportive of the wild and scenic river designations.

The outstanding remarkable value (ORV) listed for the Copper Creek drainage is 'wildlife', the value of preserving the healthy boreal toad population located in this area. This is one important ecological value of this area. In addition, I argue that there is an 'other value' in the form of 'scientific value'. As described above, the long history of RMBL research in the Copper Creek is an excellent resource of scientific knowledge of the Copper Creek and tributaries that feed into it. We have long term studies of the macro-invertebrates in the river; these data are valuable for assessing river health in the Copper Creek and rivers everywhere. In addition, RMBL hydrology research contributes to our understanding of the quality and quantity of water in the Copper Creek and other mountain watersheds. The 'scientific value' of the Copper Creek is another value supporting the 'wild' designation.

Please contact me if you would like additional information or clarification.

Thanks,

Jennifer Reithel, PhD

Science Director, RMBL