

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/6/2019 3:34:15 PM

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Comments: I would like to comment on Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests Draft Revised Land Management Plan. While I do not live in Colorado, I am concerned with the proposed ban on the use of pack goats on national forest land. This is setting an unwarranted precedence that could lead to the total exclusion of pack goats in all national forests. Our community is growing. Pack goats are a viable way for many people, including the elderly and very young, to enjoy remote areas.

To date there are no indications that pack goats can transmit disease to wild sheep. There have been studies that show that pack goats are highly unlikely to be infected with the pneumonia. In one study by Dr. Tom Besser at the University of Washington, goats were infected with pneumonia virus and after living for 100 days with Bighorn Sheep, the sheep were not negatively affected.

Pack goats are very well bonded to humans and will not leave their side, even when being threatened by predators. I have been packing with goats for 20 years and have never lost an animal. The possibility of a goat coming in contact with wild sheep is very remote.

Please remove the ban from the proposed draft. I also suggest that you add goat packing to the list of recreational activities to be included in the areas of concern.