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Comments: GMUG National Forest Comment

GMUG Forest Planning Team:

Thanks for including the public in the Preliminary Draft Plan and wanting our feedback. While I appreciate the recognition of high volume use and the associated planning for areas like the Divide Road and Highway 65 there are some other areas of the Plan that could use improvement. Local Forest Service lands are imperative to the health of our economy and community.

First, I advocate for the highest levels of protection for the municipal watersheds in the Forest. Locally Kannah Creek supplies the water to the entire valley and it is critical that this watershed has the highest level of protection. These highest levels of protection should withdraw future development, timber harvest, and all types of mineral extraction. The City of Grand Junction issued a Watershed Protection Ordinance for Kannah Creek and I encourage the Forest Service to recognize that this watershed supplies the drinking water to all of Grand Junction. To help ensure riparian health and availability of clean drinking water it is important for these watersheds to have the highest levels of protection.

Second, there is minimal recommended wilderness in the Preliminary Draft Plan. Unique areas like Kelso Mesa and Unawep Canyon were not included in this Draft and I hope to see them included in future iterations of this Forest Plan. Without protecting critical and special areas like these we are setting the forest up for failure and will see impacts on forest health and the ecosystems that directly impact our communities.

Again, I appreciate that the Planning Team wants the involvement of the public at this stage of the planning process. I hope you take my recommendations into consideration and look forward to future steps of the process that ensure proper management of the forest for future generations.

Best regards,

Pete Wagner

CEO & Founder

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