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Organization:

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Comments: Comments on current Draft

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the current draft. I attended the Palisade 'open house' briefing and have read some of the material.

First, the diagram of watershed and riparian areas is useful. Yet I didn't see language that sounded like a standard. I have hiked and spent time in the Kannah Creek watershed and would like the strongest standard applied there since it affects the Grand Valley drinking water, and is home to river otters, deer and many other species. Any tributaries to the Gunnison River that Forest Service land abuts should see strong protection as well. My partner and I have boated several sections of the Gunnison and it's clear that many species, not just us, rely on it.

Second, I support in large part the Community Conservation Proposal. It is backed by field observation and scientific inquiry. Kelso Mesa and the parts of Unaweep Canyon that are Forest Service deserve strong protection. Unaweep is an area I've hiked and photographed and East and West creek are vital to ranchers and wildlife, support fish populations, and rare plants as well as butterflies, so that the portion under Forest Servicemanagement in that area should see standards and protection of the highest order for this unique area. There is private conservation land adjoining in that area so creating a cooperative style would make sense, if an agreement doesn't already exist.

Thirdly, I see mention of Gunnison Sage Grouse but do not see definite

Standards. I believe these are mandatory for a species on the Threatened or Endangered List. There are only small and somewhat isolated populations of this bird from what I see on the USFS site. I still am in hopes of seeing one on Pinyon Mesa where I hike at times, or in another location. I go on outings with the Audubon group and find it enriching to understand birds and their behavior.

Thank you again for the chance to comment.

One last comment: if the Forest Service wants to train volunteers on how to plant sapling trees, I'm interested in volunteering for tree planting.

Cordially,

Mary McCutchan

Retired Medical Dosimetrist

also former Shoshone Fores (Fitzpatrick & Popo Agie wilderness)t summer temp

"Again and again, I am reminded that the wild, like the human spirit, cannot be managed or reproduced, it can only be recognized, protected, and honored."

-Rick Bass, "Wild Berries"