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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Forest Plan for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest.

I am pleased to see that U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has increased the size and scale of Wildlife Management Areas and provided a robust level of detail and attention to the impacts that recreation has across the forest. It is critical that we endeavor to protect Colorado's wildlife at a time where they are seeing unprecedented pressure from climate change, recreation use and continued habitat fragmentation.

However, there are also a number of aspects of the plan that require improvement. Foremost among them is the paltry level of acreage of recommended wilderness in the plan. In 2007, under the Bush Administration, USFS recommended 125,000 acres as wilderness. Just 14 years later, in Alternative B, or the preferred alternative, USFS is proposing to recommend just 34,000 acres in the over three million acre GMUG National Forest as wilderness. It is clear that as time goes on, lands that are untrammeled by man become all the more valuable and irreplaceable.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to provide my comment on the draft plan and look forward to continuing to engage in the planning process.