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First name: Susan
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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your Draft Revised Forest Plan.

I am writing, as a native Utahn who has marveled at and found solace in these landscapes, to ask you to support the conservation alternative as you begin planning for the long overdue revision of the forest plan for the Manti-La Sal National Forest.

Please, as a first step, remember that all these lands are cultural lands homelands of peoples who lived on and cared for these lands long before Americans arrived. For that reason, please listen to indigenous voices at every step in the planning process so that traditional knowledge will be reflected in the final plan. Give them a seat at the table for the duration of the planning process rather than just checking a box at the end saying tribal nations were consulted after a plan is written. This is their homeland with culturally important plants, waters, places to gather and sacred sites. Let their voices be in the final plan.

Thinking of sacred indigenous lands. Bears Ears National Monument its restored landscape of 1.3 million acres should not be part of this forest plan. The Biden/Harris administration will restore Bears Ears soon. Stand-alone management planning with leadership from the indigenous community will then get underway and reflect the original intent of shared management from the original monument proclamation.

Give voice to the plants. Old trees are marvels. Enduring multiple challenges to life, (many from humans) they have endured. Please make sure that this management plan will protect trees over 150 years old and manage the young trees so that they will become old-growth marvels.

And give voice to the animals living in the Manti-La Sal. In particular, please designate the pinyon jay as a Species of Conservation Concern and manage the forest to help them rebuild their populations from the devastating 85% decline in numbers.

Grazing is part of the multiple use mandate and leases have been signed. But to allow 60% utilization is out of sync with the science that tells us 30% utilization is the sustainable utilization for the landscape and for the long-term economic health of ranchers.

Finally, and critically important for future generations, is to set aside the wildest areas in the forest for Wilderness designation. Please give the highest level of protection to these areas: Left Fork Huntington Creek Research Natural Area, Sinbad Ridge Research Natural Area, Red Towers Botanical Area, and Heliotrope Botanical Area.