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Comments: As a senior citizen and retired scientist, I have hiked and explored the backcountry of Utah extensively including several areas in the Manti La Sal National Forest. There is no other National Forest like it and it is critical we protect and preserve its unique characteristics. The best way to do that is to prioritize the protection and preservation of the natural and cultural resources that make the Forest such a special place. Above all the Forest Service must not promote the expansion of motorized recreation in currently un-roaded and primitive areas as these areas must be protected for wildlife and potential wilderness as well as maintaining opportunities for the public to find the natural solitude of the Forest. There is no reason to designate a motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum class in areas where this kind of recreation is not currently occurring and therefore is counter to protecting other recreational uses and resources.

The Forest Service must ensure the native vegetation and wildlife is protected after years of logging that has resulted in the loss of old growth ponderosa pines. Again the Forest Service cannot continue to promote projects to devastate the landscape by masticating and chaining large areas simply to try to increase livestock forage by transforming native forbs and shrub habitat into grazing pastures of invasive grasses. This type of ill-considered management is ludicrous! Not only does it cost taxpayers but has resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of acres of native vegetation across the Forest with adverse impacts to both the soil and wildlife.

The Forest Service should consider a comprehensive Conservation Alternative that would manage the forest responsibly, and an alternative that addresses climate change, watershed protection, native plant restoration, wildlife, and protect cultural and ancestral landscapes that are found on the Forest. A Conservation Alternative should be considered as a stand-alone alternative in the draft environmental impact statement.

Thank you for accepting and including my comments as part of the record.