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First name: Barbara
Last name: Kruse
Organization: Kruse
Title:
Comments: Although we live in Georgia, we have visited the Moab area several times and biked through the Manti-La Sal National Forest. Our daughter is a botanist with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Because of her work we are especially appreciative of the importance of native and rare plant conservation in the maintenance of healthy ecosystems.

We have read about the native species of bees that have evolved as pollinators of the native plants present in the La Sal Forest and how important these bees are in maintaining that ecosystem. We have also read how the honey bees can dominate and displace the native bees not only by competing for the pollen and nectar the native bees require for food but by introducing diseases that are fatal to native bees. In addition, the massive numbers of honey bees that would occupy the national forest, if the honey industry was allowed to pasture it, would propagate the spread of invasive plants whose pollen they favor. This could lead to the elimination of native plants and permanently change the ecosystem, which would not be good.

A compromise between the demands of the honey industry and maintenance of public lands is really a national issue. The honey industry can not be allowed to invade any public land it chooses. But appropriate areas should be identified where the honey industry can prosper. The solution reached here could become a model for the whole country.