Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/25/2021 9:27:03 PM
First name: Kalen
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear Supervisor Nehl and the planning team:

Thank you for your ongoing planning work across several years and multiple Manti-La Sal and DC leadership changes. Over the thirty-one years I have lived in Moab I have come to appreciate the critical importance of the La Sals for our area's water, recreation, economy, and ecosystem. During this time I have observed recreational use of these ranges increase dramatically, multiple wildfires, and the impacts of a changing climate and changing uses on the vegetation. I appreciate and support the creation of the Moab Geographic Area as a tool to manage the unique values and resources on the west face of the La Sals.

I request that the Conservation Alternative be considered fully and equally in the Draft EIS for the Manti-La Sal Forest Plan Update. I believe there are many aspects of the Conservation Alternative that warrant full consideration as a means to the conditions that are in the best interests of Moab and our larger community. Specifically, I would like to draw attention to the watershed protections, climate adaptation plan, quiet recreation, and habitat and wildlife protections. A healthy watershed is essential to our continued enjoyment of life in Moab, and the community in the City and Spanish Valley depend on the aquifer recharge and filtration provided by the water that falls on the La Sals.
The recreational opportunities in the La Sals and Abajos are of great importance to me and many other residents and businesses. I think a top planning priority is to fairly allocate recreational opportunities amongst various groups, even as use numbers increase. I hope that hikers, bikers, jeepers, skiers and others will all have ample recreational opportunities in the La Sals. In particular, please consider the noise impacts of on and off-road motorized vehicles as a user conflict area, rather than limiting the consideration of conflict to the narrow strip of physical interaction on roads. This will not happen by accident; it will require a careful "zoning" approach by the USFS.

Further consideration of the identified possible wilderness zones could contribute significantly to ecosystem health and other goals. The Research Natural Area provisions in the Conservation Alternative as proposed encourage the USFS to allow independent science and research to take place on the Manti-La Sal. Our mountains are under-studied, and we will all benefit from more knowledge of the ecological and geologic processes taking place.

I think climate change adaptation and resilience are of great importance to forest health, and downstream ecosystem services. Measures targeting this area will contribute to water providers' supply of safe and reliable drinking water, and also beautiful places to recreate, habitat for wildlife, and carbon storage. Please make this a priority for the new plan, including wildfire preparedness and smart forest planning to allow for healthy fire to be a management tool without being a disaster. Maintaining the current species mix of conifers and a healthy understory is paramount to the continued resiliency of our forest, and I hope you are prioritizing this goal. Additionally, I strongly support the Conservation Alternative's proposal to adjust, annually and early, recreational fire, grazing, and other uses, based on drought levels, to reduce the harm to our watershed from human caused wildfire and overgrazing, such as have previously impacted the La Sals.

Allowing grazing and unregulated dispersed camping to degrade the crucial areas of our upper watershed is contrary to the best interests of our community, and I ask that you consider removing these uses from the Moab Geographic Area, as detailed in the Conservation Alternative. In addition, continuing to allow bear pursuit hunting in areas where I and many people go to enjoy quiet recreation is dangerous and contrary to allowing multiple use. Even if the USFS chooses to continue to not exercise its right to manage wildlife, the use of packs of unleashed dogs by a tiny fraction of forest users for this activity can be regulated. Introduced and exotic mountain

goats should be removed from the forest due to their ongoing damage to the delicate alpine ecosystem, and Mt Peale RNA.

Thank you for your work on this much needed Forest Plan revision. I am looking forward to future opportunities to engage with the Forest Plan Revision process and team, and ultimately to management of our forest attuned to current social and ecological pressures.