Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/26/2021 1:44:07 AM
First name: Michael
Last name: Graves
Organization: COTAH RALLY ADVENTURES
Title: Director
Comments: I am always worried about any closures to federal lands, currently the Western Slope of Colorado and the Eastern part of Utah have gone through a lot of changes to federal lands from what was in place in the 1970s. I do not want to see any more land closures for motorized vehicles,it would appear that there is a driving force to make large tracks of federal lands off limits to motorized vehicles or recreational vehicles. Upon large areas being restricted they are being replaced with smaller areas to operate recreational vehicles in. I have never understood restricting off road vehicle access for recreational vehicles instead of oversight, repair and enforcement. I look at what happen when the Escalante Canyon area in Mesa County, Colorado became a conservation area and when a wilderness area was put in south of Fruita, Colorado. Now there is a wilderness study area that is in effect for the area that is on the west side of Glade Park, Colorado in Utah and another one for the Uncompahgre Plateau. Three areas are BLM lands and one is Forest Service that were great areas to off road in and now one is completely gone and the Escalante area has had numerous road closures due to the reclassification. When you put more users in one area and make it smaller it has a major impact to the terrain. It is a work of art now a days to try to stay on a high clearance four wheel drive road and make a perfect circle from Moab, Utah to Colorado through the Western Slope through the BLM and Uncompahgre National Forest and through the Manti La-Sal and back to Moab. We use to go from Palisade, Colorado to Green River, Utah on the north-side of highway I-70, now that access is gone. If the game plan is to replace motorized recreational vehicle access for foot traffic, horseback and mountain bikes well the powers that be are doing a really good job of it. As a person who grew up in Mesa County, Colorado and has spent time in the Moab area in the 70s before Moab became what it is today it is hard to see all of the places that we use to go now shut down to access. We have permits to operate within the Manti La Sal and Uncompahgre National Forest on the road and trail systems for the current approved MVUM for both forest. Along with permiting for the Moab, Grand Junction, Montrose BLM offices. When we sit down and look at the maps for both federal land agencies for selecting routes for our activities the selection of trails and roads is very limited in size for the size of the area that we are to operate in. If an area has to be shut down for erosion or for repair there should be another road or trail added to that trail system to keep it all connected together without a loss of miles from the MVUM. I remember what the loggers did to to federal lands with all of the slash piles and top soil chewed up by tracked or rubber tired heavy equipment when the soils were wet and the associated damage that incurred during that time and for many years and the USDA turned a blind eye to that behavior before the behavior was changed. I am not for anymore road or trail closures or more wilderness areas that are going to restrict access to federal lands for motorized users. As I always tell people when the large ski areas that operate on federal lands ask to do an expansion the USDA never fails to tell them no and more ski runs are cut into the National Forest. But for regular every day users of federal lands well we keep losing federal lands for recreational motorized use every year it seems.