

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/8/2021 7:40:33 PM

First name: Karen

Last name: Janssen

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to state my support of Alternative D. I am a thirty-three year resident of the Gunnison Valley, and an avid outdoors person. I have roamed these forests far and wide, on foot and on bicycle. I served on the board of the Crested Butte Land Trust for seven years, and have been involved (first as an employee and then on the board) with 1% for Open Space for over twenty. For me, the open lands that surround us are a huge part of my life and of the utmost importance. I've been an educator all of these years, and feel that these spaces are crucial to the development of a healthy next generation.

The adoption of additional wilderness areas is crucial in this day and age. Maintaining sufficient habitat for numerous species is essential, as are the open spaces for human, non-motorized travel. Covid has thrown into relief the need that our race has for wild places. These places have seen use like never before, and this trend will only continue. Once gone, they can never be reclaimed. Along these lines, please retain and add Wild and Scenic eligible segments to the plan, and strengthen Riparian Management Zones. Our rivers and watersheds need all the help they can get in these climatically uncertain times.

I recommend the 246,000 acres of SMA recommendations in Alternative D, as well as the concept of WMAs. I ask that those be retained and strengthened with additional plan components, such as maintenance of habitat blocks at least 500 acres in size having no roads or other human intrusions in all areas assigned to this management area. I'm concerned about big game management, as well as protection of at-risk species.

Particularly concerning to me (in all the Alternatives) is the excessive amount of land that is suggested as suitable for logging. I agree with the statement: "the GMUG National Forest is much more valuable for conserving biological diversity and recreation than it ever could be for timber production." The designation of what is 'suitable' includes steep slopes, critical sage grouse habitat, and other lands that would be far better left alone. Again, once it's gone, it's gone. I grew up in the Pacific Northwest, and have seen the permanent scarring that timber extraction has left on the land. It's devastating, and for what? Short-term benefits not visible or experienced by most.

I do appreciate the efforts by the GMUG to evaluate the intense recreational growth that our forests are experiencing, and to set guidelines in that area. Bottom line: I am a very strong advocate of QUIET places. These areas are our solace. Snowmobiles, drones, motorcycles....while they have their place, are hugely impactful to all living things. I'm cautious about the establishment of new routes of travel, in the Almont Triangle to mention one area. Habitat connectivity should be a key consideration.

I understand that Winter Travel Management Plans will occur after the adoption of the Forest Plan. I feel that the objective should state that the final winter travel management outcomes are not pre-determined by the Forest Plan, and that all stakeholders will be equally represented throughout the process. A stated goal is that within one year of the Final ROD, all units will complete a Winter Travel Management Plan. I am a member of the Friends Hut Board of Directors, and we've felt strongly that this is an important issue.

In conclusion, I ask that you support Alternative D. It's a critical time. We need to make today's decision with the far-reaching future in mind. Wild places are essential.

Thanks for your consideration,

Karen Janssen