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First name: Julia

Last name: Liao

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Forest Plan for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest. I am writing to express my concern that the alternatives in this plan fall short of ensuring adequate, long-term health of the forest. I would like to ask that you reconsider the current short-sighted nature of allowing continued exploitation of this important and iconic area.

Given the growing pressures of climate change, increased recreation, and other challenges we face, is imperative that we protect places like the entirety of Kelso Mesa as recommended Wilderness, and other areas across the forest as Wildlife Management Areas. Not only do these designations capture the state of the landscapes now, they ensure they are managed for their best use in the future and maintain access.

In addition, waterways like Kannah Creek are critical to local municipal water supplies, as well as to agriculture, recreation, and wildlife. Designating lands as Watershed Protections Areas and individual waterway stream miles as Wild and Scenic are two important steps in ensuring these resources are adequately conserved.

Alternative D may do the best of capturing the breadth of protections needed and deserved on the Forest, but it falls short in many regards. The lack of designations for areas like Recommended Wilderness, Wildlife Management Areas, and Special Management Areas, along with increasing suitable timber acreage by 50% are examples of where Alternative D could be greatly improved.

Your inclusion of strong protections for the landscapes listed above, and all other areas deserving of protection, is how the Forest Service can best fulfill its mission, support Western Colorado, and leave a positive legacy for future generations. As a Coloradan I ask you to make these commitments now to the landscapes that we all deeply treasure, and that make Colorado so unique.