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First name: John

Last name: Chandler

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service Planners:

I am writing you today to provide comments on the recommended GMUG Forest Plan. I have been a resident in Crested Butte and Gunnison County for 25 years. I am a member of the Colorado Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA), a member of the Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association (CBMBA), and have been a volunteer and member of these organizations for several years. I am a life long hunter, passionate angler, mountain biker, and outdoor enthusiast. My son has been raised enjoying all aspects of the GMUG Forest, and my family spends as many days in the local forest as we possibly can. We hope to continue this tradition for generations to come.

I strongly support the Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) identified in Alternative B. These WMAs are of the utmost importance to the habitat and migration corridors of big game in the GMUG. Working with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to identify big game connectivity to seasonal big game habitats should be considered the highest priority as these landscapes are being compromised rapidly. To that end, I support the permanent standard of restriction to both non-motorized and motorized routes to 1 linear mile per square mile in areas identified as critical big game habitat. This standard, if not an even more restrictive standard, should be maintained in all identified Roadless Areas. As a mountain biker I can say I enjoy and appreciate the developed trails as much as anyone. However, I believe any new trails should be constructed as "stacked loops" and should not divide or encroach upon undeveloped wildlife habitat. As the saying goes, "They aren't making any more of it", and the Forest Plan must maintain as much roadless and uninterrupted big game habitat as possible.

The GMUG supports nearly one fifth of all Colorado populations of mule deer and elk habitat, and an equally important collection of native trout fisheries. Critical habitat protection including WMAs, vegetation management, and limiting route densities must be considered critical to the directives of the GMUG Forest Plan. Of extra concern is the management of big horn sheep and their interactions with domestic sheep in the GMUG. Domestic sheep permits and grazing must be managed in a way to absolutely restrict interactions with big horn sheep habitat and the possibility of spreading disease. These restrictions must be adopted and managed alongside the Bureau of Land Management and should be identified by utilizing the expertise of Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff.

I support the collaborative efforts, lengthy research, and developed planning created by the Gunnison Public Lands Initiative. I hope the Forest Plan will utilize this proposed legislation as a guiding tool constructed by the many varied organizations and the people they represent.

Thank you for considering my opinions on the Forest Service Plan. I appreciate the massive efforts put forward by Forest Service staff to direct our public land management for the future of our wild lands, wildlife, and communities.

Sincerely,  
John and Mary Chandler