

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/12/2021 8:57:49 PM

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Organization:

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Comments: I currently live just north of Cedaredge, Colorado, about five miles from the USFS boundary. This close proximity to National Forest land is one of the primary reasons I choose to live where I do, and I frequently hike, ski, fish, hunt, and gather firewood on Grand Mesa. My drinking water originates in Surface Creek, within a few miles from my house on these public lands.

The most important issue to me on the GMUG National Forest is the large number of roads and trails that are available to motorized vehicles. Motorized travel needs to be curtailed as much as possible to retain the natural character of the land, reduce impacts to wildlife and improve hunting quality, and maintain water quality. In most cases, roads necessary for timber harvest should be closed or obliterated following harvesting operations. ATV's and over the snow vehicles should be confined to designated trails only. For these reasons I strongly support Alternative D in the Draft Plan.

In addition, I feel that all cross country ski trails maintained under Special Use Permit with the Grand Mesa Nordic Council (GMNC) should be designated as "Over Snow Vehicles Prohibited Seasonally". Specifically, the "Existing Winter Travel Management Map" shown in the draft plan should have designated the entire Ward Creek ski area as "Over Snow Vehicles Prohibited Seasonally", including the Skinned Horse trail on the east side, since it is within the Special Use Permit for GMNC. This area has seen increasing use from snowmobiles over the last few years. Over snow vehicles seriously detract from a back country skiing experience, and pose safety hazards to skiers as well.