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Organization:

Title:

Comments: [External Email]RE: Support for the WMAs included in the "Blended" Alternative (B) for the GMUG Forest Plan Revision

[External Email]

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Dear USFS GMUG Planning Team,

I believe the 740,000 acres of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) included in the "Blended Alternative" (or Alternative B) for the GMUG Forest Plan Revision will benefit wildlife at a landscape level. The WMAs in Alternative B will maintain habitat connectivity for wildlife across the forest by limiting route density to 1 linear mile per square mile within areas that contain migration corridors and the highest priority big game habitats. Conserving these areas will benefit multiple species for decades to come.

Other components of the GMUG Draft Forest Plan I support include:

-A forest-wide Desired Condition that supports conservation of the remaining wildlife security areas on the forest. This Desired Condition addresses a critical issue for maintaining big game populations on the forest and should be upgraded to a Guideline to further prioritize conserving wildlife security areas during project level planning.

-Alternative B allows for active vegetation management on large portions of the forest. This is critical to effectively manage the risk of catastrophic wildfire, improve wildlife habitats, and implement forest health priorities.

Additional measures that could be included to strengthen conservation in the GMUG Forest Plan include:

-Additional Objectives to evaluate opportunities to reduce route densities in WMAs and the most critical wildlife habitats to increase habitat connectivity and reduce fragmentation;

-The benefits provided by WMAs would be enhanced by additional Standards and Guidelines to ensure that any commercial timber sales within WMAs are designed specifically to benefit wildlife;

-Bighorn sheep are at risk on the GMUG due to the potential for disease transmission from contact with domestic sheep. Bighorn sheep should be identified as a Species of Conservation Concern in the Plan.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Dowson

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