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Comments: We live in Telluride and my primary concern is that of climate change. Over the last few summers, smoke from near and far wildfires has enveloped our community and has changed our lives. We deeply value clean air to breathe. Wildfire smoke contains a number of toxins in particle sizes so small that they easily permeate the lungs. These spring, summer and fall wildfires imprison us indoors on otherwise beautiful days. Wildfire smoke imperils our health, our quality of life, the biodiversity of our forests, and the economy of our recreational industry.

Industrial logging reduces carbon sequestration, reduces soil moisture, removes tree canopy shade cover and removes the vegetative biodiversity of a forest, increasing the likelihood of wildfires. Conversely, intact healthy forests help in maintaining the water cycle of earth and help retain soil moisture, making wildfires less likely and less severe.

The climate crisis is here to stay and we cannot allow the GMUG Forest Plan and EIS to ignore that fact. Instead, the recommendations must include intensive science-based management of our forest lands so that these lands become an important mitigation factor against increasing global warming. Climate change considerations for the carbon sequestration and disaster mitigation potential of intact ecosystems must take precedence over any other concerns, especially destructive activities such as industrial logging. Therefore, conservation and designated Wilderness Areas must be increased, and industrial logging severely decreased or eliminated. Additionally, degraded areas and old roads must be re-wilded with the intent of increasing biodiversity of both flora and fauna.

We are entering a severely challenging new era and must recognize that fact.