Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/26/2021 5:09:42 PM
First name: Ches
Last name: Russell
Organization: Scenic River Tours, Inc.
Title: Owner/Operator
Comments: November 27, 2021
Dear Forest Supervisor Sam Staley,
Scenic River Tours appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests Draft Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.
Scenic River Tours has been a family owned outdoor adventure company on the Taylor and Gunnison Rivers since 1977. Permitted by the USFS, we offer guided rafting, fishing, inflatable kayak, and rock climbing trips in the Taylor River Canyon on the Gunnison National Forest. Scenic River Tours operates on property we own within the Taylor River corridor on CR 742. Sustaining recreational opportunities for everyone in the canyon is important to us.
We respectfully request that the Taylor River between Lottis Creek and the confluence of the East River - forming the headwaters of the Gunnison River- be found eligible as Wild and Scenic in the final plan. The Taylor River within this segment is free-flowing and has outstanding and remarkable recreation opportunities, including rafting, fishing, and kayaking.
Our customers travel from all around the Country to experience the Taylor River, with its' majestic canyon scenery and fun whitewater. Between the Upper, Middle, and Lower sections of the Taylor River, we are able to offer whitewater rafting trips for a diversity of skills and interests, from family float trips to high intensity whitewater. Existing USFS public and commercial river access put ins (e.g. South Bank, 5 Mile, and others), allow for safe access for everyone. We believe there is adequate public access to support the current recreational uses occurring, and strongly encourage USFS management to continue maintaining and improving public river access in the Taylor River corridor.
We recommend that the Taylor River be classified as Recreational since it is paralleled by CR 742 and there are a number of bridge crossings along this segment.
As owners/operators of Scenic River Tours for over 40 years, we are local experts on the recreational activities that exist on the Taylor River and we are invested in ensuring these outstanding opportunities are protected for the future.
Sincerely,
Ches Russell and Dustin Brown
Scenic River Tours, Inc.