

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/27/2021 4:49:40 AM

First name: Chad

Last name: Hixon

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the RMP for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) national forest for the coming years.

My name is Chad Hixon and I reside in Howard, Colorado. I, as many of us in the West, am a public land lover. Aside from my high interests in public land I am owner of two small businesses in Salida, Colorado, an active volunteer with the USFS and BLM and the Executive Director for the Trails Preservation Alliance (TPA). Please accept these comments as my own unique comments separate from those submitted on behalf of the TPA.

As a 2nd generation Colorado native throughout my life I have enjoyed a plethora of recreation activities on our public lands. Camping, Hiking, Mt. Biking, Skiing, Snowmobiling, Kayaking, Rafting and Fishing are all experiences that I enjoy or have enjoyed at one time or another in the GMUG. While I recognized the importance of all forms of recreation my current interest predominantly revolves around the activity of off highway motorcycling. My family and I have enjoyed countless adventures with our motorcycles in many districts of the GMUG but predominantly the Gunnison Ranger District - our neighboring forest to the West. We are excited to continue to create more memories throughout the GMUG including many of the routes we have yet to have time to explore. Of the highest value to us are motorized single track routes that allow us to loop back to parking and/or camping spots. We also highly value the many other trail categories and roads that allow us to travel the GMUG from point to point without utilizing primary roads.

I see the current management of much of the forest as being adequate. With roughly 50% of the GMUG designated Roadless or Wilderness the USFS has taken the lead to protect half of the GMUG with these highly restrictive management categories. Therefore, any changes to be made to better manage the GMUG into the future need to embrace a flexible management strategy that will allow the USFS to adapt to unforeseen future circumstances. Fire, flooding and increased visitation are just a few issues that come to mind. With a plan that is likely to be in place for a minimum of the next 2 decades it is imperative the USFS has the ability and tools to adapt as needed.

It is for this reason that I generally support Alternative C with the following modifications -

The addition of verbiage from Alternative B that protects motorized access to the Continental Divide Trail and areas around the trail.

Consistency between Wildlife Management Area trail densities and the best available science that are based on wildlife population counts published by CPW

The addition of specific protection to any route that has already been approved as a motorized route in site-specific Travel Management by the USFS. In particular any of these routes that have been proposed to be encompassed by the Primitive or Semi Primitive Non-Motorized ROS category

Thank you.