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Organization:

Title:

Comments: 11/20/21

To Chad Stewart,

Thank you for considering comments from the general population and extending the timeline to 11/26/21/ Although I'm a newer resident in this area, I want to contribute in meaningful ways to preserve what people have created and tended to for generations. I believe balance is key. With such diverse interests competing to be heard, it's important to strike compromises and I'm sure that's being attempted.

Wilderness advocates need business/recreational users and vice versa. A healthy forest will not be attained through benign neglect or overuse. Extremes simply don't work no matter which end of the spectrum they rest on.

I enjoy hiking and skiing in these lovely lands and the delicious meat shared by my hunting friends. I have contributed for years to environmental groups and am disturbed by the trash, old tires, etc. I see deposited by careless users who don't respect the land. I also remember the wise words of an old boyfriend who was a timber faller. And we lived in an area where this same debate was not only contentious but sometimes violent between the "tree huggers" and the timber advocates. He taught me the importance of "pruning" the forest, as in gardening, to manage it. Not clear cutting, mind you, but helping it to stay healthy and not overgrown. In a sense, the land really does belong to everyone. And if only one side "wins", then no one wins. Egos and power grabs have no place in this discussion, unfortunately, they frequently do.

Forests need pruning and we know the reasons. There are so many benefits to removing dead trees and thinning out dense areas. The hunters, anglers, hikers, bikers, etc. who use the lands recreationally appreciate when they're healthy and well managed. The local economy thrives as well. However, I don't believe all lands need to be easily accessible to the general public. Anyone who reads in national papers hear the stories of tourist overwhelming communities disregarding rules/limits and disrupting areas to stressful levels (thanks Instagram). Some lands need protection and you should work damn hard to get to them- no easy car access. That's the reward for your efforts and you appreciate the end result more because you didn't just pull up in a car to get there.

After attending the Western Slope Water Summit, I learned enough about the complex water systems (man's and nature's) to be concerned that the forests are well managed. Too many humans fail to comprehend what's required to keep their taps open and their mouths full. They don't know and don't seem to care. As long as they pay their bills and get their needs met, they figure it's someone else's job. Let's preserve and improve on what's established here. The front range can manage their own backyard. Let's not allow them to manage ours.

Concerns with the current plan -

How will long term progress be monitored and measured?

How will socioeconomic objectives for timber and other forest products be measured? What are the specific objectives in these areas?

How can the economy of the forest be efficiently utilized? (Timber products, local jobs, productivity of mills)

Governments don't have the best reputation for efficiency and planning. Please don't be offended at this

statement. I worked for counties and states for 24 years. I see both sides! Overspending taxpayers money with dismal results is too common a complaint. Good measurements quantify the hard work everyone is putting in. Lets surprise everyone with a "business" plan that actually looks like it came from a business rather than a bureaucracy! I support increasing the harvest level to at least 70,000 CCF a year if for no other reason then to keep the Montrose Mill viable (although we know there are plenty of other reasons[hellip]).

OK, I've said enough. Thanks for reading my long letter and for all the hard work you all do.

Elisa McKee