

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/22/2021 11:00:00 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on the Draft Plan of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests Plan Revision. These forests mean so much to my family, for my business, and the future of our community. I have lived in Paonia since 2000, and I frequent our surrounding forests for biking, skiing, and learning about wildlife. My ten-year-old daughter and I go skiing up Stephen's Gulch, hike Lamborn Mountain, visit the Beaver Reservoir, leaf-peep over Kebler Pass, and gather Christmas trees in the Grand Mesa National Forests. I sincerely want my experiences in these areas to continue and to be preserved for future generations. I care deeply about protecting the wilderness that exists in our National Forest lands and feel strongly that these resources can be lost very quickly if proper management doesn't exist. I emphatically support the recommended Wilderness designations included in Alternative D, as well as support the inclusion of all recommended Wilderness areas presented in the Community Conservation Proposal and Gunnison Public Lands Initiative. After working for five years for the North Fork River Improvement Association when it was the watershed group for our area, I've witnessed first-hand how important water is to the future of my community. I support the protection included in Riparian Management Zones, but ask that standards and guidelines be enhanced. I support the eligibility findings for all the stream segments included in the draft revised forest plan. Ruby Fork of Anthracite Creek and Deep Creek, and other stream segments were previously found eligible but have been left out of the revised draft forest plan. Please include all eligible segments. Resources must be protected if we want these forests to sustain their wildlife characteristics when my daughter is my age. I strongly support the Wildlife Management Area concept presented in the draft plan, and ask that those be retained and strengthened. Additional plan components for this designation are needed to ensure retention of security habitat for big game. Please implement a standard that requires leaving habitat blocks at least 500 acres in size with no roads or other human intrusions in big game habitat in all areas assigned to this management area. This will further bolster protections for wildlife species. Your work on updating the forest plan for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forest is incredibly important, as it is the first opportunity for us all to update the current plan from 1983. THANK YOU for your efforts, and please prioritize the protection of wilderness, wildlife, and water resources in this new revision.