

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/26/2023 4:22:38 PM

First name: Devon

Last name: Benton

Organization:

Title:

Comments: High Uintas has more livestock grazing than any other Wilderness in the country.

Years of extensive grazing by domestic sheep has displaced native wildlife, led to persecution of predators like bears, coyotes, and mountain lions, marred the landscape, compromised water quality, and negatively impacted visitors seeking an authentic Wilderness experience. Over the past couple of decades, bighorns from a nearby reintroduction effort have found their way into the High Uintas Wilderness and a nascent herd is becoming reestablished on its eastern end where domestic sheep grazing ended years ago. But the future of the bighorn herd and its ability to recolonize its native range across the High Uintas is in doubt because much of the rest of the bighorn range is filled with domestic sheep that carry disease fatal to the bighorns. In the U.S. Forest Service released Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement it's clear the plan is to continue this destructive practice of grazing sheep & their lambs for two months every summer, to the exclusion of native wildlife. The SDEIS fails to disclose how many native predators-such as black bears, mountain lions, or coyotes-are killed in the High Uintas Wilderness to protect domestic sheep, nor the effects continued sheep grazing has on the potential for recovering native wildlife such as wolves and grizzly bears. Rather than remove the threat of domestic sheep and allowing the bighorn population and other wildlife populations to expand, the Forest Service proposal essentially endorses the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' (UDWR) approach to maintain bighorn numbers by killing native predators, especially mountain lions, and augmenting the bighorn population with translocations and by constantly modifying the habitat.

Please support the no grazing option as it is best for the wildlife, watersheds, recreation, and the Wilderness. At the very least, the Forest Service should close any sheep grazing allotment if the permit is waived back to the Forest Service.