

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/17/2023 4:08:34 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear GMUG Planning Team,

I am filing this objection to the GMUG National Forests Plan.

The responsible official for this plan is Forest Supervisor Chad Stewart.

My objection applies to this statement on page 38:

"FW-MA-IVSP-13: To increase awareness, educate partners and visitors of the potential risk of pathogen transmission to native plants and animals (e.g., recreation pack goats and bighorn sheep, the need to decontaminate wading boots to reduce spread of chytrid fungus or whirling disease)."

It is important for the Forest Service to recognize that there is not one single recorded example of a packgoat spreading disease to bighorn sheep anywhere at any time.

This statement is based on pure speculation and should be replaced with a real world example rather than a hypothetical one. Using packgoats as an example of pathogen transmission when they have never once been implicated in any such event leads to misinformation and unfounded prejudice.

As the North American Packgoat Association continues to battle such prejudice all over the west, we would encourage the GMUG team to remove this statement. Examples should always be based on reality rather than conjecture. Examples should also apply more universally.

The packgoat example is not applicable to most recreationists and it perpetuates the myth that packgoats have transmitted disease to bighorns. The packgoat example should be replaced with one that is based in fact and is relevant to more users.

I have been objecting to this example ever since the first draft of the plan came out and I hope that it can be resolved in this final step.

I have no objection to the actual rules in the final plan concerning packgoats on the GMUG. You have done a good job there and I believe other forest plans should follow your lead.