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First name: Sue

Last name: Navy

Organization:

Title:

Comments: October 27, 2023

To: Forest Supervisor Chad Stewart

Re: GMUG National Forest Plan #51806

Dear Chad Stewart and Forest Planning Team:

I file this objection as it was with great frustration that I learned of your decisions on the elements of the Revised GMUG Forest Plan that I have been most concerned with, namely Wilderness and forest health. I hope the objections raised by myself and other members of the conservation-minded public will influence you to revise the plan as presented.

Having been involved with GPLI since before the diverse stakeholder committee's inception, and knowing that it was formed with the intent of presenting a unified proposal that (we believed) would almost surely be incorporated into the final forest plan, I was completely taken aback to see that the majority of the GPLI proposal was dismissed. Elected officials (Senator Bennet, Gunnison County Commissioners, etc.) have given their wholehearted endorsement to GPLI, even going one step further in introducing the GORP Act in Congress. I don't know what justification you used in rejecting so much of this ribbon-wrapped offering.

This iteration of the Forest Plan comes 40 years after the last Forest Plan, not 15 years, as this plan is supposedly intended to last. In another 40 years, there wouldn't be much left of the forest to manage, given all the logging that could occur in coming decades. We can't afford to miss an opportunity to protect our natural resources to the best of our abilities through this Forest Plan, as we may not have a viable opportunity again. In this day and age, we should not decimate our forests in the interest of logging companies. An additional 300,000 acres of forest would be best served as Wilderness, not as "suitable" for logging. I ask you to seriously restrict the acres deemed "suitable" for logging. It's time for a shift in focus from extraction to sustainability and conservation, especially in the face of climate change.

I certainly hope that you will review the GPLI proposal more closely, and adopt its recommendations. Wilderness is needed for climate mitigation (carbon sequestration, protection from extractive industries), wildlife habitat for innumerable species (including threatened and endangered), pure waters, and to provide untrammeled settings for people as well. With the increase in motorized uses (i.e. e-bikes), wildlife habitat would most surely be further fragmented and degraded without Wilderness status. WMAs are a good start, but Wilderness offers better protection from the various incursions.

These are among the issues that I raised in my previous comments on draft GMUG forest plans. I hope that this time they will receive greater consideration, and better results.

Sincerely,

Sue Navy