

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/4/2024 7:11:04 PM

First name: Leroy

Last name: Frankel

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Local governments, ranchers, businesses, outdoor enthusiasts, sportsmen, and community members have worked together in pursuit of protections for the Thompson Divide's dozen watersheds. The USFS proposal to administratively withdraw Thompson Divide from new mineral development will provide much needed long-term protection.

The Forest Service and BLM should recognize that hunting, fishing, ranching, and recreation in the Thompson Divide area support nearly 300 jobs and \$30 million in annual economic output for local communities. These sustainable uses should be prioritized over the destructive practices of mining and fossil fuel extraction on our publicly owned lands.

The Forest Service and BLM should close the Thompson Divide area to oil and gas leasing and mining for at least 20 years. The proposed Mineral Withdrawal would protect 225,000 acres of public lands from future oil and gas leasing, as well as mining. Benefits to air quality, wildlife habitat, watersheds, wilderness corridors, and our climate would be immediate and worthwhile.