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First name: Lynn

Last name: Cudlip

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USDA Forest Service:

After reviewing the Thompson Divide EA and Draft FONSI, I am in support of Alternative A . The proposed withdrawal supports ongoing ecosystem services (non-market values), which are difficult to evaluate, yet important. Some of the services may include achievement of water quality and water discharge, recharge and storage - critical to our ongoing issue with a drying climate in the west. Disrupting these particular services, can affect watershed resources. By choosing Alternative B, mineral and oil exploration and extraction actions identified in the Reasonably Foreseeable Development Report could create potential risks to watershed resources and the accompanying ecosystem functions. At this point in time, we cannot compromise our water resources, and where there is a chance to provide additional protection to water quality and quantity we should.

I've worked as a wetland scientist for years, and am adamant that as little impact to our water resources and watersheds occur as possible. Water will become even more critical to our survival in the future. The proposed Thompson Divide Withdrawal is one step in providing additional protection to all waters, including those of the US, our groundwater, water in isolated wetlands, riparian areas and the list goes on.

In addition, the proposed Alternative A identifies no effect to recreational activities and the area's terrestrial and aquatic organisms and their habitat. As a result this proposed withdrawal provides additional protection for recreational opportunities, critical to the economics of the western slope of Colorado. I also understand that Alternative A will ensure that the terrestrial and aquatic organisms and their habitat will see no effect as a result of the withdrawal and will actually prevent potential risks to these resources as reviewed in Reasonably Foreseeable Development Report.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Alternative on this Draft Finding and am hopeful the FONSI is finalized. This is part of a larger effort, that has been going on for a long time, to protect our backyard.

Sincerely,  
Lynn Cudlip