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Organization: Hinsdale County

Title: Chair, Commissioner

Comments: June 14, 2024

Re: Comments for Over-Snow Travel Management Plan Proposal Rio Grande National Forest

The Hinsdale County Board of County Commissioners has reviewed the proposed Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) maps for the Divide Ranger District of the Rio Grande National Forest for lands found within Hinsdale County, Colorado. The portion within Hinsdale County includes the headwaters of the Rio Grande, portions of the Continental Divide, several reservoirs, North Clear Creek Falls, and a variety of recreational destinations.

We submit the following comments:

1) Hinsdale County encourages the Rio Grande National Forest to work with the adjacent San Juan National Forest and Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests to coordinate over-snow travel management planning. The southern portion of Hinsdale County is located on the San Juan NF; the middle portion of Hinsdale County is located in the Rio Grande NF; the northern portion of Hinsdale County is located in the GMUG NF. Collaboration with planning efforts is important for landscape-scale decisions and resident and visitor information and understanding of rules and access.

2) Hinsdale County is 96% public land, spanning three different National Forests and one field office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Hinsdale County has a tourist-based economy. The Hinsdale County Sheriff's Office, Search and Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services consistently respond to incidents on public lands. For winter recreation tourism, the continued groomed trails are vital for timely first response.

3) Hinsdale County maintains a primary communication site on BLM land with access through the Rio Grande National Forest (Hill 71). Maintaining year-round access to this site is imperative to public health and safety.

4) Hinsdale County supports multi-use recreation on winter trails, with education for user groups to encourage courtesy and reduce conflicts.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

Kristie Borchers, Chair, Commissioner

Robert Hurd, Vice Chair, Commissioner

Greg Levine, Commissioner