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Comments: As a Routt County resident, I strongly oppose the Forest Service granting consent to lease these ten parcels-approximately 13,850 acres-for oil and gas development. I share the Routt County commissioners' concern that the Draft Environmental Assessment substantially understates the potential effects on recreation, wildlife, water, and the local economy. The proposed parcels overlap the Bears Ears Trail, Black Mountain and Sugarloaf North Colorado Roadless Areas, important watersheds and wetlands, and crucial habitat for cutthroat trout, elk, mule deer, greater sage-grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, and other wildlife. Industrial development, roads, traffic, noise, habitat fragmentation, invasive weeds, and the risk of spills are incompatible with these lands and the lasting value they provide.

The Forest Service should not rely on an outdated 1993 analysis that predates modern horizontal drilling or conclude that leasing would have no significant impact. The agency must evaluate reasonably foreseeable development as well as the cumulative effects on neighboring lands, county roads, wildlife migration, water quality, climate, and recreation. Oil and gas development has not demonstrated sufficient local economic value to justify these risks. I urge the Forest Service to reject the proposed finding of no significant impact, withhold consent for all ten parcels, and select the no-leasing alternative