Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/26/2021 11:00:00 AM
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Organization: Jacobs Family LLLP
Title:
Comments: [Copied from attachment]

Our family has been in the North Fork Valley of the Gunnison River for five generations. We have camped, hunted and fished, hiked, cross-country skied, snowmobiled, ATVed, and ridden horseback--often clearing trails along the way--on many parts of the GMUG. We have held grazing and hunting permits on the forest. We have built roads, maintained trails, developed springs and stock ponds. Members of our family have been involved in coal mining and logging and worked as a Forest Service employee including being part of a hot-shot fire team sent to CA. We have water rights that originate on the forest which are coverage by Ditch Bill easements. In cooperation with the FS, we have improved our decreed water diversions to allow fish passage and eliminate the need to rework the area each spring. We have worked with the FS to oppose a planned bike trail from Carbondale to Crested Butte under the premise that the FS did not have personnel required to maintain such a system. We have asked the FS to patrol and ticket ATV users on the roadless area adjacent to our ranch. We were told tickets could not be issued because boundary location was uncertain (This was before today[rsquo]s map apps). We are currently extracting gas on our private property adjacent to the forest. Our family has raised crops, fruit, cattle and sheep. We have grazed public land in CO and UT. Our ranch borders the Gunnison National Forest. We understand sustainability and actively participate in multi-use and conservation.

One of our concerns is the proposed exploration of the expansion of the Raggeds Wilderness Area. This is not an appropriate area for such designation. From the proposed map, it appears that the expansion would come close to the Ragged Mountain Trail, FS 898, and private land. The restrictions that come with Wilderness eliminate flexibility in management. We also believe the expansion of roadless areas only hinders multiple use.

We no longer have grazing permits but believe grazing is beneficial to the forest. It is particularly important in reducing undergrowth which becomes tinder in a fire. Uncontrolled vegetation robs the soil of moisture which then reduces stream flows and spring outputs. Permittees maintain trails for their livestock to use which are also used by wildlife. These trails are then used by recreational users. Ranchers understand sustainability. Sustainability requires care of all resources. Abuse a resource, and it is no longer an asset. There are multi-generational permittees on GMUG forests. Livestock is not an invasive species. Rangeland is a carbon bank. We understand that many environmentalists believe ranchers are not good stewards of the forest. Environmental groups must be included in plan development but cannot continue to be a major driver in policy development.

This plan is part of the big picture that the USFS needs to revise. The testimony given to the US House of Representatives Natural Resource Committee[rsquo]s subcommittee Natural Parks, Forests and Public Lands speaks well to this. I incorporate this testimony by reference.
https://naturalresources.house.gov/hearings/wildfire-in-a-warming-world-opportunities-to-improve-community-collaboration-climate-resilience-and-workforce-capacity

I also incorporate by reference the comments of the Delta County Livestock Association.