**6.25.19 BOCC meeting re: GMUG Community Conservation Proposal**

Thank you.

Ask: request in the Commission’s comments to the GMUG Planning Team re: the preliminary (or working) draft of the Forest Plan that you explicitly support the Community Conservation Proposal for the landscapes in Ouray County determined to possess wilderness values. Name 5 landscapes. Not so concerned today about Whitehouse as has been vetted for a decade and part of the CORE Act.

We seek to protect the natural resources within these parcels – namely wildlife habitat, corridors and linkages, rare/sensitive plants, forests, watersheds, and riparian - while maintaining current access and uses. No motorized routes or mountain bike trails will be closed or affected by adopting the Communitiy Conservation Proposal. Hunting, grazing and all current uses will continue.

Currently all these landscapes with the exception of the Whitehouse addition are labeled as “general forest” meaning they have no added protection – other options wildlife management zone, priority watershed, wilderness. Since Bear Creek, Abram and Hayden were part of the Uncompahgre Primitive Area they were not analyzed under the Colorado Roadless Rule, therefore they don’t even have protection under the Roadless Rule.

Note: your support of this proposal is critical. If the planning team finds that these landscapes possess wilderness values or characteristics consistent with the Wilderness Act, these parcels will be managed to protect those values. It does not mean these landscapes will necessarily be recommended for Congressionally designated Wilderness by the Forest Supervisor. However if these parcels are not considered wilderness quality in the forest plan, the USFS is not required to manage for these characters – wildlife, rare/sensitive plans, scenic values, primitive recreation, etc. Nor will they likely stand the chance of ever being recommended for federal protection by Congress if not designated in the Forest Plan.

Remember these plans according to federal guidelines should be updated every 15-20 years, however by the time this plan is adopted nearly 40 years will have passed since the last plan revision. In the face of increasing population, recreation pressure and climate change, it is critical that we consider the integrity and resiliency of our local ecosystems now to protect air and water quality, the natural resources that benefit residents and visitors and drive our local economy and for the sake of the natural resources themselves regardless of human benefit.

We have

1. Ground truthed and surveyed these parcels – hiked on and off trail
2. Have several dozen business endorsements with many more yet to solicit
3. Support from

* Ridgway Town Council,
* OTG,
* UWP
* Lariat Equestrian Club

1. Presented to and conferred with

* CPW/Kelly Crane who recognizes wildlife values within the 5 landscapes
* Ridgway Area Trails
* Ouray Climbing Association
* local respresentatives of Outdoor Alliance (stakeholder group of human powered recreation users

We continue to solicit support and educate businesses, non-profit organizations, elected officials and the general public.

**Your expressed concerns:**

1. Private Mining Claims – time with Bob Risch using Google Earth and ouray parcel overlay on the county website. Over 10,000 acres of mining claims purchased by Red Mountain Project with LWCF dollars and transferred to USFS.

Reminder: private mining claims are not incompatible with wilderness (especially at the administraivt level and even with Congressionally designated Wilderness.) Examples can be found in the Uncompahgre, Weminiche and Holy Cross Wilderness Areas among others. Findings

* **Baldy** = 0; review values
* **Bear Creek** = Mtn Lion (north) & Bell of Ouray inaccessible, Sharon Crandall (IL) 4 or 5, chances are inherited, no intention of accessing; all others outside boundary. Ray Marcus; Rebecca Shield, Champion=Maurice Kautz review values wild & scenic!!
* **Hayden:** majority of mining claims exclude Barstow and Greyhound Mines. Idarado Mine has asked OTG to help keep Spirit Basin “road” closed to motorized use between Barstow and Greyhound. Road to Greyhound only used by Clark family. Bumper and Aaron Calhoon Lance Barker 3; N004848; Aaron Calhoon (2-3) N004467, outside our boundary (or easily adjusted boundary) May need to adjust cut out on NW psuedopod; East of Chicago Peak = Campbird private. N004550 remnants unlikely to develop; State Board of Land Commission 82 acres. review values
* Abram Mountain/Mt Abram (Abram Cutler) very northern, N004723 = Great Republic, Roberta Karsh; N004353 Yorktown Gordon Family Trust; N004724 = Texas Mine Justin Kier (CA) require ropes. N004845 Ozark John Fick; N00 4462 Joe McClellan Note: RMP with Idarado Resource Damage Funds trying to acquire, awaiting appraisal; 3 south on GMUG map acquired and those excluded; in process of purchase with 4462. review values

2. Water rights & infrastructure (current and future)

Conversation with representative from Trout Unlimited who also is a? member of Ouray Water Association, examples of water rights within Congressionally-designated wilderness (ex. easement written into the bill language.) existence of water rights is not incompatible with wilderness (and again we are asking for your endorsement of a proposal to an administrative procedure – not a piece of legislation. Details will be written into any legislation.) plus one rancher.

Using Colorado Decision Support Systems website (Colorado Conservation Water Board & Division of Water Resources/Dept of Natural Resources) I reviewed 318 structures within Ouray County focusing drainages within our proposed boundaries and didn’t only 1 active structure on the southern end of proposed Hayden polygon. diversion records are not maintained

Historical structure only - no longer exists or has records, but has historical data (H) majority

Inactive structure which physically exist, but no diversion records are maintained a few on Hayden

1 Active structure but diversion records are not maintained (U) most southern structure on Hayden Evalyn PL & Water Right

I’d like to hear more specifics about your concerns.

Cary Denison conducted research for Bennet’s office re: SJ bill.

water rights decreed in error or very old and abandoned by courts for SJ.

old water rights above Ouray decreed for mining but mines no longer in use.

**OVERALL GMUG PLAN: to consider**

* Adaptive management – directive very weak; only a few guidelines (advisory) near to no standards (required action) wait until damage to resource occurs then “study/analyze” before rectifying the situation – too late
* does not adequately address climate change which is required by 2012 Planning Rule
* should have suitability analysis for grazing (not just timber and coal = required)