Opportunity to protect wildlife and watersheds

In the wake of Earth Day and amidst ongoing severe drought and threats of another wildfire season, Great Old Broads for Wilderness is encouraging the US Forest Service to look closely at protecting some Ouray County landscapes in the ongoing forest plan revision process. Specifically, within the more encompassing Community Conservation Proposal (see paid ad in this *Plaindealer* edition) we have recommended the Baldy Roadless Area and the Bear Creek basin for addition to the Uncompahgre Wilderness as well as some special considerations for the Hayden Mountain region and the Abrams/Brown Mountain area. All these areas harbor critical wildlife habitat - all of them for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, mule deer, elk and black bear and several for the endangered Canada lynx. These landscapes also provide important connectivity for wildlife migration between elevations, summer and winter ranges, and across the region. Wildlife watchers, hunters, photographers and other recreation users contribute vitally to our local economy and come to our region for the quality of nature experiences found here. In addition, these regions encompass significant watersheds essential to irrigation and agricultural producers throughout the Uncompahgre Valley. Given increasing recreation demands and the devastation our public lands experienced last summer, we are bracing ourselves for another busy season. Protection of these wild places is critical to sustaining our diverse economy and providing the lifestyle residents and visitors alike appreciate. Please visit gmugrevision.com to learn more about the Community Conservation Proposal and show your support for wild places. Contact us at northernsanjuanbroadband@gmail.com if you want to get involved in this effort.

Robyn Cascade

Northern San Juan Broadband

Great Old Broads for Wilderness

Ridgway