May 5, 2021

Sean Ferrel, Renewable Resources Staff Officer, GMUG National Forest

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Dear Mr. Ferrel,

High Country Conservation Advocates, Western Slope Conservation Center, Defenders of Wildlife, The Wilderness Society, Conservation Colorado, Western Colorado Alliance, Rocky Mountain Wild, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Wilderness Workshop, Sheep Mountain Alliance, and Western Environmental Law Center welcome you to the GMUG! We are excited to work with you on projects throughout the GMUG National Forest, including the Forest Plan revision process.

Our organizations represent members from across the Western Slope who live and work amongst the GMUG National Forest landscape, bringing place-based knowledge and enthusiasm to public lands issues. Collectively, we represent thousands of local community members that depend on sustainable management of our National Forest lands, and we work closely with local business owners, key stakeholders, and elected officials to ensure healthy and wild public lands today and for future generations .

Beginning in 2016, our coalition worked with our respective communities to develop the *Community Conservation Proposal*, which was first submitted to the GMUG in 2017. This proposal, which can be found at [gmugrevision.com](https://www.gmugrevision.com/), would conserve ecosystems that are severely under-protected and vulnerable, protect key habitats for rare and imperiled species, enhance landscape connectivity for species movement and survival, safeguard regional drinking water sources, and provide sustainable outdoor recreation. It includes a combination of recommended wilderness and Special Management Areas (SMAs), and was designed to emphasize conservation values and sustain existing recreational uses.

There are many areas of the GMUG that would benefit from increased protections. Places like Electric Mountain in the North Fork, Kelso Mesa on the Uncompahgre Plateau, and Sawtooth Mountain south of Gunnison are incredibly wild, possess high conservation value, and should be recommended for wilderness. Other lands like Kannah Creek on the Grand Mesa, Lamborn in the western West Elks, and Lone Cone in the rugged San Juans provide critical habitat for big game, and special management would help ensure that wildlife and wildlife-related recreation thrive into the future. The *Community Conservation Proposal* provides an in-depth examination of these and a number of other potential conservation areas, and justification for why they should be recommended for wilderness or SMAs in the revised GMUG Forest Plan.

We would welcome the opportunity to walk you through our proposal in more detail and/or host you for a site visit. Feel free to reach out to us with questions or thoughts, and we look forward to meeting you in the near future.

Thank you,

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