November 11, 2020 published in Montrose Daily Press with similar version in GJ Sentinel

**Future Forest Health Depends On Conservation Efforts**

I suspect many folks feel proud that an Englemann Spruce cut from the Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre-Gunnison National (GMUG) Forest will grace the West Lawn of the Capitol this holiday season. I ponder this tradition (celebrating its 50th anniversary) of harvesting a healthy, 55-foot tall tree from one of our National Forests while trees across our state and nation are dying and burning amidst drought, insect infestation and climate change. As we honor this tradition that celebrates our natural resources, I mourn the approximately 40 environmental laws – from the Clean Air Act to the Endangered Species Act - that have been waived for specific projects (like the Border Wall) or rolled back under the current administration.

During the GMUG Forest Plan revision process currently underway, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, coalition partners, and diverse stakeholders (including businesses, ranchers, recreationists, and elected officials) prepared and submitted a Community Conservation Proposal, which will help maintain and promote forest health and watershed integrity as well as protect wildlife corridors, sensitive species and scenic values into future decades.

I encourage you as individuals and business owners to visit this website <gmugrevision.com> to learn more and support the Conservation Proposal to manage and protect our forests, so healthy trees can continue to appear at the Capitol. Thank you to the many Montrose County businesses and residents who have already endorsed these initiatives. Please contact me at northernsanjuanbroadband@gmail.com if you would like to engage in this effort, have questions, or seek information about our organization’s activities.

*Robyn Cascade, Volunteer leader*

*Northern San Juan chapter*

*Great Old Broads for Wilderness*

*Montrose & Ouray Counties*