USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests
2250 South Main Street
Delta, CO 81416
970-874-6600
TDD: 970-874-6660
Fax: 970-874-6698

File Code: 1920
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PHIL CHAMBERLAND
GUNNISON COUNTY (DIST. 3)
200 EAST VIRGINIA
GUNNISON, CO 81230

Received
County Administration
5/17/17

Dear Commissioner Chamberland:

This June, the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG) are initiating a Forest Plan Revision process under the 2012 Planning Regulations found at 36 CFR 219. In 2006, we put our previous multi-year plan revision effort on hold until the Colorado Roadless Areas were defined and a final planning rule was promulgated. Now, after ten years and with a new planning rule in place, we will issue a formal Notice of Intent in the coming weeks to initiate the GMUG Plan Revision in the Federal Register and Grand Junction's *Daily Sentinel* newspaper, which will officially begin the process.
The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our intent to re-initiate Plan Revision and to invite your agency to participate early and throughout the three-year process.

The 2012 planning rule requires public participation in each phase:

Phase 1: Assessment

In this first phase, we will rapidly update and supplement our 2006-era assessments of social, economic and ecological conditions to determine the need for changing the GMUG's Forest Plan. Given what we heard in stakeholder interviews, conducted by the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute in the fall of 2015, diverse stakeholders throughout our communities value the products of the 2006 planning effort as a starting point. But they also noted, and we recognize, that we have a new planning policy, changed resource conditions, and likely new public perspectives that compel us to thoroughly update that work. We intend to complete our assessment updates by late 2017.

The purpose of public participation in the assessment phase is to identify information regarding existing conditions and trends of the Forest resources and the broader social, ecological, and economic landscape. We invite you to participate during this phase, with informal but early, important involvement in our assessment update. This participation would likely entail 1) providing a staff contact who may attend a meeting to discuss key pertinent issues and trends; 2) assistance in identifying the most critical needs for change in management in the Forest Plan; 3) reviewing the GMUG's draft assessments and providing feedback.

If nothing else, we request your assistance to identify any existing plans and planning processes of which your County is a part. Are there other pertinent local, regional, and/or state plans that we should be considering? The GMUG is only a part of our broader, managed landscape, and these assessments should identify the relationship of the GMUG Plan to existing plans within that landscape.

Phase 2: Plan Development and Analysis

In this phase, we will develop a Need for Change, a Proposed Plan, and complete an Environmental Impact Statement, which will include alternatives to the proposed plan. This phase will officially begin with a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS published in the Federal Register. At that time we will invite you to become a formal cooperating agency, and we would establish and operate under a Memorandum of Understanding. Plan development and analysis is scheduled to span two years, and we anticipate beginning this phase in early 2018.

Phase 3: Implementation and Monitoring

In this phase, we will implement the final direction included in the Revised Forest Plan and monitor outcomes to ensure we are meeting the intent of the Plan and Rule. This would be ongoing throughout the life of the revised Forest Plan.

Please contact Forest Planner Samantha Staley at 970-874-6666 or samanthajstaley@fs.fed.us if your agency will join the GMUG National Forests in the immediate term for our assessment update. Please also contact us if you can provide information regarding existing plans or planning processes that are pertinent for the GMUG to consider. At such time that we begin the formal NEPA phase, we will once again invite you to become a formal cooperator. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

for SCOTT G. ARMENTROUT
Forest Supervisor