AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

Agenda Item: Ratification of Correspondence; Signal Peak Trails

Action Requested:

Parties to the Agreement:

Term Begins: **Term Ends:** **Grant Contract #:**

Summary:

Please see the attached correspondence for ratification.

Fiscal Impact:

Submitted by: Josh Ost **Submitter's Email Address:** jost@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by: Discharge Date:

County Attorney Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reveiwed by: Discharge Date: Certificate of Insurance Required

Yes ○ No ○

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mbirnie Discharge Date: 2/16/2018

◉ Consent Agenda ○ Regular Agenda ○ Worksession Time Allotted: 0

Agenda Date: 2/20/2018

Revised April 2015

Gunnison County
COLORADO

GUNNISON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Phone: (970) 641-0248, Fax: (970) 641-3061
Email: bocc@gunnisoncounty.org
Website: www.GunnisonCounty.org

February 15, 2018

Bureau of Land Management
Gunnison Field Office
210 West Spencer Ave, Suite A
Gunnison, CO 81230

Signal Peak Trails Proposal Planning Team,

The Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed alternative (Alternative B) for the Signal Peak Trails Plan. Furthermore, we appreciate the opportunity afforded us to participate as a cooperating agency and the time the BLM has spent in public outreach for this project. The level of public engagement to us, as the county commissioners, has been strong as well. We believe that your goal in presenting the Alternative B concept was to make strong science and fact based decisions that allow the public to be heard and a plan that will be widely accepted in the spirit of compromise and honoring the BLM mission of multiple use management of our public lands.
As in many decisions that impact different constituents in different ways, the Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has been approached by both individuals and groups representing wildlife, sporting and recreation opportunities to advocate for their desires. In addition, we have had correspondence and discussions with property owners near the proposal that both support and have concerns about trail development opportunities. In addition to fielding comments and thoughts from those who live in the City of Gunnison and those in the North end of the valley, we have also heard input from residents of Tomichi Heights, Cranor Hill, and the Lost Canyon Tracts. Despite what is often at first blush differing opinions on what should happen on the ground, a common thread that is easy to decipher is that the underlying desire by most is that we take care of our greatest asset in Gunnison County to the best of our ability - that asset is our natural environment.

As mentioned, we were asked to advocate for some differing positions including the following:

- Endorse the original envisioned Plan for 45.3 miles of non-motorized single-track trail.
- Endorse NO trail development in the Signal Peak Area.
- Endorse the elimination of all north facing trail alignments, including North Woods.
- Endorse the need for non-motorized connection to Lost Canyon Road.
- Endorse the opportunity to utilize up to the full 28 miles of trail as limited by the CCA.
- Endorse different types of closures and/or restrictions or elimination them.

We assured each of these constituents and groups that we would voice their concerns and ideas in an effort to help the BLM craft an option that most would feel struck a balance. We applaud your difficult task to make sure that the final plan lands on a solid decision backed by your planning documents, best available science and public input. That said we feel the proposed Alternative B takes into consideration the major concerns of recreationist and sportsman alike, while balancing the protective measures necessary for wildlife and habitat. We believe it has taken the best on the ground science from BLM scientist and the scientific input of Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) as well. Additionally, this area was specifically called out in the Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) as a viable area for managed recreation development within the parameters of that agreement. Finally, along with many partners the

county has been at the forefront of Gunnison Sage Grouse conservation and this plan reflects enhanced protections for the lek and associated habitat in this area.

While their will continue to be strident debate on both sides of the Signal Peak development potential, we support the proposed Alternative B which outlines trail alignments, certain closure elements and camping restrictions in the planning area. We will support the continued collaborative work between the BLM, Gunnison County and the Gunnison Basin Strategic Sage Grouse Committee and other collaborative partners in finding opportunities to balance wildlife conservation as well as recreation and sporting opportunities for our residents and guest as well as for generations to come.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment and our inclusion as a cooperating agency.

Best Regards,

Phil Chamberland, Chairperson | Jonathan Houck, Commissioner | John Messner, Commissioner