



File Code: 1920

Date: August 5, 2008

Dear Forest Stakeholder:

I want to take this opportunity to update you about Forest Plan revision on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG). The comment period on the March 2007 Proposed Plan was suspended by a federal district court ruling that enjoined the use of the 2005 Planning Rule. Subsequently, in April 2008 the Forest Service released the 2008 Planning Rule (new rule) which corrected the items specified by the court.

With approval of the new rule, I considered reissuing the Proposed Forest Plan. However, for several reasons I have decided not to proceed through the 90-day comment period on the March 2007 version. First, the proposed plan is neither fully compliant with the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, nor the Colorado Roadless Petition recommendations for roadless area management. This is critical because the roadless issue affects nearly one-third of the Forest.

Additionally, the Rocky Mountain Region has been progressing with its planning to complete a rulemaking effort based on Colorado's Roadless Petition. The draft rule and EIS were released for public review and comment on July 25, 2008, with completion anticipated in early 2009.

The GMUG Proposed Plan is also not fully consistent with this draft rule and EIS, and we anticipate that the public would find these all these inconsistencies to be confusing if there were two review processes occurring simultaneously.

Therefore, I have chosen to delay formal resumption of the forest plan revision effort until the Region completes the analysis and a decision is made on how Colorado's Roadless Areas will be managed. Upon promulgation of this rule, my staff will modify the GMUG Proposed Forest Plan to be consistent with whatever decisions are made.

In the meantime, there are some new modifications and analysis requirements that can be addressed in preparation for the next version of the Proposed Forest Plan. Planning team members will begin work on these elements during the interim. One of these new requirements relates to climate change. The Chief of the agency has committed to addressing this emerging issue in all new forest plans. To assist us, we would like to hear your suggestions about how the Comprehensive Assessments or Proposed Plan components should be modified to reflect climate change factors. We welcome your ideas, comments, concerns, or analysis references on this issue.



We hope this brings you up to date with our Forest Plan Revision efforts, and that you understand my reasoning for this course of action. Please direct your questions or comments to Anne Janik at 970-874-6637, email them to [r2\\_GMUG\\_planning@fs.fed.us](mailto:r2_GMUG_planning@fs.fed.us), or physical mail them to GMUG Forest Plan, 2250 Highway 50, Delta CO, 81416-2485.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Charles S. Richmond*  
CHARLES S. RICHMOND  
Forest Supervisor