



DELTA COUNTY, COLORADO

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

COUNTY COURTHOUSE • 501 PALMER STREET • SUITE 227 • DELTA • COLORADO • 81416-1796

PHONE: (970) 874-2100 FAX: (970) 874-2114

www.deltacounty.com

Dist. 1: C. Douglas Atchley - Dist. 2: C. Bruce Hovde - Dist. 3: J. Mark Roeber

March 30, 2016

Matt Janowiak, District Ranger
U.S. Forest Service-Columbine Ranger District
P.O. Box 439
Bayfield, CO 81122

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Weminuche Landscape Grazing Analysis

Dear Mr. Janowiak:

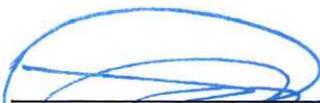
The Delta Board of County Commissioners strongly supports Alternative 4 with the inclusion of forage reserves and increased flexibility for restocking and expansion when supported by adequate forage and vegetative conditions.

Delta Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) represents 17,000 head of sheep in our county and we see similar pressures to reduce sheep grazing in our area as expressed in the DEIS for the Weminuche Landscape. The Weminuche DEIS is covered by the MOU between the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Wool growers and BLM. The MOU covered what would be done in the case of contact and how to minimize risk. These guidelines already accomplish the temporal and spatial separation which the DEIS claims will effectively redress disease transmission. The mentioned practices provide for the separation needed and are closer to what is actually seen on the landscape. The experiments mentioned in the Weminuche DEIS have been conducted under laboratory conditions and in small pens and again do not reflect the largeness of the landscape. The Delta BoCC urges BLM to discontinue using the presence of bighorn sheep as a means to reduce or eliminate domestic sheep grazing in the Weminuche Landscape and other areas.

Similar to previous NEPA documents that evaluated sheep grazing in Delta County, the BoCC is concerned about the lack of reference to ongoing research being conducted by USDA's Agricultural Research Service. In order for a USDA USFS document to show the full range of alternatives, the full body of research should be disclosed and analyzed. The USFS is not mandated to manage for "zero risk"; however the Weminuche DEIS repeatedly mentions this as a goal.

The above mentioned comments and conditions on the ground are the primary reasons that the Delta Board of County Commissioners support Alternative 4 with the inclusion of forage reserves and increased flexibility for restocking and expansion when supported by adequate forage and vegetative conditions.

Delta Board of County Commissioners



C. Bruce Hovde, Chairman



C. Douglas Atchley, Vice Chairman



J. Mark Roeber, Commissioner