

March 29, 2016

Matt Janowiak
Columbine District Ranger
P.O. Box 439,
Bayfield, CO 81122
comments-rocky-mountain-san-juan-columbine@fs.fed.us

Dear Mr. Matt Janowiak,

I am writing to provide comments for the Weminuche Landscape Grazing EIS Draft. While I agree with Alternative 4 being the preferred alternative, there are few additions I would suggest be added to the final draft of the EIS.

In Section 2.4, monitoring plans for Alternatives 3 and 4 are laid out in detail. The process seems to be thorough in monitoring the use of the land and the presence of the Bighorn Sheep. However, it might be beneficial to have plans in place for occasional reassessment of the socio economic/ recreational value of the allotments versus the value of the grazing land. As mentioned in the draft, the number of grazing sheep has gone down following a shift in the market away from wool and lamb. If this trend continues, there may come a time when the socio economic and recreational value outweighs the value of grazing on the land. The recent rise in the service industry will also have an affect on this comparison. By having a monitoring/ reassessment plan in place for this, it would enable the Forest Service to more quickly adapt to trends and ensure that the land is being put to the best possible use.

Section 3.6 further explains the potential impact that the grazing sheep could have on the Bighorn Sheep population. On some allotments, it seems as though the two species can wander within a very small distance of each other. Considering the sensitive status of the Bighorn Sheep population, it might be beneficial to require and maintain a greater distance between the two species. This distance would be easier to maintain by using GPS tracking with the Bighorn Sheep and further minimize the possibility of the species being adversely impacted.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this Environmental Impact Statement draft for the Weminuche Landscape Grazing plan.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Wheeler

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Wheeler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI