



**Roadless Areas Review Task Force
Fort Collins Public Comment Meeting
Steamboat Springs Middle School
5100 Amethyst Drive, Steamboat Springs Colorado**

**May 18, 2006
5:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.**

5:00 pm Welcome and Introductions

5:10 Panel #1: Forest Service: Mary Peterson, Forest Supervisor
(20 minute presentation, 20 minutes Q&A)

5:50 Panel #2: State and Local Government *(7 minutes per speaker, 15 minutes Q&A)*

- Routt County Commissioner – Doug Monger (Hayden)
- Moffat County Commissioner – Tom Gray (Craig) & Dave Watson (County Land Use Board member)
- Jackson County Commissioner – John Rich (Walden)
- Steamboat Springs City Councilman – Towny Anderson
- Colorado Division of Wildlife – Jim Goodyear

6:40 Panel #3: Stakeholder Groups *(7 minutes per speaker, 20 minutes Q&A)*

- Rich levy, Routt Forest Protection Group, Steamboat Springs
- Ray Heid, Del's Triangle 3 Ranch (Steamboat Springs)
- Joe Pittington, Walden Timber Mill (Walden)
- Kent Vertrees, Blue Sky West Outfitters (Steamboat Springs)
- Brett KenCairn, Community Alliance of the Yampa Valley
- Jo Stanko, local rancher, Steamboat Springs

7:40 Break

7:50 Open Public Comment Period – public interested in speaking will fill out a speaker sign-up form and indicate topics which will be covered to allow the Chair to select a range of perspectives to hear from; (1 minute each)

8:45 Adjourn

Public Meeting Ground Rules

RESPECT

- Refrain from clapping and jeering
- Keep to the time allotted (one minute)
- Use time for new perspective; do not repeat previous points



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Meeting Summary

PANEL #1: FOREST SERVICE (FS)

Mary Peterson, Forest Supervisor and Frank Romero, Staff Office for Planning and Information presented information on the Routt National Forest.

General Information on Routt

- 1.2 million acres of federal managed lands (including 113, 832 acres of Arapaho-Roosevelt)
- 22% of the Forest is Wilderness (260,000 acres; Mount Zirkel, Platte River, Flat Tops, Rawah, Neota, Never Summer, Sarvis Creek)
- 442,000 acres of inventoried roadless areas; in 1997 67% of roadless acres were allocated to management areas that retained roadless characteristics
- 25% of roadless is in other management prescription categories that retain roadless characteristics
- Forest Plan revised in 1997 after five years of public involvement and plan development
- Roadless area direction was formulated through extensive public involvement and interdisciplinary process
- Roadless areas were mapped with a 660 foot road buffer on all system roads
- Roadless area management was based on maintaining long-term forest health, restoring ecosystems, and providing diverse recreation opportunities, while retaining management flexibility
- Suitable timber acres within Roadless areas makes up 20% of Routt's suitable acres
- 33% of roadless areas were allocated to a timber mgmt in roadless areas – if these areas were removed from active timber management it would require an amendment to Routt's revised plan and would reduce saleable quantity

Changes Since 1997

- 1997 Blow down event – impacted approximately 20,000 acres; 59% in Wilderness areas
- Bark Beetle increase from blow down and drought
- 2000 landmark wild land fire season; this initiated the National Fire plan that addresses firefighting, rehabilitation, hazardous fuels reduction, community assistance and accountability

- More people within the boundaries; more development at the interface; particularly Brushy Creek and Morrison Creed roadless areas
- Communities at risk: lodge pole pine and spruce

Differences between Forest Plan & 2001 Rule

- Existing Forest Plan direction provides for new uses within some portion of inventoried roadless areas, if consistent with management area direction and after appropriate environmental analyses
- 2001 rule does not necessarily allow for new uses, particularly for those which require new road construction
- 2001 rule generally does not allow timber harvest, road construction or new uses and does allow continuance of permitted existing uses
- Forest Plan disallows some and allows and/or limits the following uses in some areas timber harvest, road construction, and new uses, and allows continuance of permitted existing uses

Questions & Answers

Question: Is there access to municipal water facilities in designated roadless areas for maintenance?

Answer: Yes, under the existing permit.

Question: Is road building allowed in prescription categories 3-5? If yes, how would the decision be made?

Answer: Depending on what the prescription says, road building is allowed in categories 3-5. The decision making process is conducted through a NEPA process including public involvement, environmental assessment, and disclosure.

Question: What is the significance of tree mortality within roadless areas?

Answer: Significance depends on the management prescription for the area. Beetle mortality work was part of a cooperative assistance process – stands were rated based on age, density, proximity to epicenters of beetle epidemic. Some areas allocated to timber management are closest to communities at risk and have high mortality, thus higher fire risk or contaminants. Task force might want to look at this.

Question: What areas or other portions *not* allocated to timber where potential for mortality are less likely need to treatment?

Answer: Many through planning process was allocated to backcountry non-motorized, we wouldn't even look at entering those areas

Question: Can we get a map distinguishing between those two areas- roadless, potential mortality, community protection zones

Answer: - We tried to do that with maps submitted; communities were on the federal register notice, state might want to look at this, depending on density of homes

Question: How would new developments established on the interface with roadless areas affect how Forest Service managed that area? Particularly in relation to wildfire protection?

Answer: If a new community were to be proposed, it would probably influence how they developed the community wildfire protection plan - reduce stands to reduce risk. Forest Service would probably do a site specific forest plan amendment, including public involvement.

Question: If a roadless area borders the edge of forest, not in timber prescription, is it fair to assume allocation because there is no risk posed to the adjacent community?

Answer: It would not be fair to assume that. When the Forest plan was developed different conditions were in place, it was more of a green forest.

PANEL 2: STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Routt County Commissioner, Doug Monger (*no submittal*) – Mr. Monger is a fourth generation Routt County native. His grandfather owned a sawmill and ran cattle and sheep through the forests. Much has changed, including land stewardship. Mr. Monger expressed his concerns and issues:

- Concerned with the limitations put on the management of the forests
- Concerned with how roadless areas are determined
- Colorado timber industry is growing and forests are unhealthy, diseased, and overgrown
- 90% of fires in Routt County are started from lightning strikes.
- Areas should be managed by locally developed forest management plans for water protection and fire protection
- Forest Service has many tools they can use and they should be given the flexibility to use them (e.g., roads, road reclamation, thinning, buffer areas, etc)
- Forests should be accessible to all Americans regardless of their physical attributes.

Moffat County Commissioner, Tom Gray (*no submittal*) & **Dave Watson, Moffat County Land Use Board** (*no submittal*)- Mr. Gray expressed support for multiple use on public lands; 25% of the forest is enough for roadless areas. On the west side of Routt national Forest there are roads that pre-date the forest (pre-1906) and are still used today. Mr. Gray mentioned pending federal legislation aimed at addressing the beetle problem. Some of the bills are very proactive by using what exists and thinning to keep the epidemic under control, but this will take roads.

The recommendation was to allow access for beetle management, fire control, recreation for disabled, and multiple use; and decisions need to include local guidance

Mr. Watson, a member of the local land use board, supports multiple use for everyone. Gates restrict handicap access; locks them out. Roads that are built with taxpayer money should be open to everyone's use. Roads are necessary for fire hazards reduction and beetle epidemic control.

Mr. Watson spoke about:

- the need for snowmobile access.
- Pre-turn of the century roads that are now locked up
- Access to old timbered areas/roads during hunting season – west End of Black mesa

Jackson County Commissioner, John Rich (*submitted hard-copy Resolution #2006-v-18*)- Mr. Rich is a rancher, still working the same ranch his family has run since 1875. He is also a municipal judge, and serves as a director of the hospital board. He conducted considerable research in preparing his opinion on the roadless issues, and extended his sympathy to the task force, noting the overwhelming magnitude of the task before them, and that the way through was not particularly clear. He noted that they have lots of wilderness, don't need anymore. On behalf of the Jackson County Commissioners, Mr. Rich conveyed some real concerns about roadless areas in their county. 29%, or 98,000 acres of the County is Wilderness, and they are worried about the addition of roadless. Mr. Rich noted that while wilderness areas are supposed to be an economic boon for the local communities, this has not been the case in Jackson County. They submitted a resolution which effectively requests that all inventoried roadless areas in Jackson County be released from roadless status and be returned to multiple use.

Finally, Mr. Rich inquired as to whether there are areas in 2477 that need further investigation.

Steamboat Springs City Council, Towny Anderson (submitted a hard-copy letter) - Mr. Wince represents Steamboat Springs. The Routt National Forest is an asset beloved by all Steamboat Springs and Routt County residents. He submitted a letter from City Council endorsing preservation of roadless areas, and this includes references to a number of specific areas. The City Council recognizes the social and economic importance of roadless areas, as well as their importance to tourism recreation and agricultural industries. They are interested in management of areas in close proximity to Steamboat Springs including those close to the ski area, Madcreek roadless area, popular parks and trails, Dome Peak, South Fork and Golden. Note the City is partnering with Routt National, Medicine Bow and Beetle Task Force in close proximity to roadless areas in Routt County. Mr. Wince noted that the original 2001 roadless rule got the most comments ever received on a proposed federal rule, 90% in favor. 96,000 of those were from Colorado, with a similar percentage of approval. The natural and economic asset provided by roadless areas arguably anchors our economy. We need to steward and protect this asset.

The common denominator is the Routt National Forest and those resources that spring from it – municipal watersheds are roadless areas- and we are growing. The economy is becoming diversified, and amenity based. A study shows that location neutral businesses are establishing themselves in the area, and that the environment and outdoor lifestyle are noted as most important. The \$35 million dollar local economy is transitioning to an asset based economic development model, which will grow and prosper through our stewardship. This transcends every aspect of decision-making. Good stewardship is knowing when not to meddle, when not to touch.

Colorado Division of Wildlife, Jim Goodyear (*submitted hard-copy letter, addition to the DOW report, and CD on comments on Routt NF*) - Mr. Goodyear presented the consistent message from the comments from staff for protection, management and maintenance to provide the most benefit for wildlife and wildlife habitat. Wildlife habitat is critical for the protection of species at risk. If protections are not maintained it could cause irreversible changes – irrecoverable habitat and degradation of ecosystems. Consider that changes for short term gain must be weighed against the potential irreversible impacts.

Mr. Goodyear recommends maintain basic provisions of the 2001 rule and clarify specific exemptions where necessary. This would allow for conservation values and characteristics critical to DOW without prohibiting grazing. Changes would need to be substantively justified and include plans for minimizing and mitigating for impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat. He warned that repealing the 2001 provisions may result in loss of choice for future generations. The recommendations need to meet current needs and preserve opportunities for future generations.

The CD distributed to the Task Force is the compiled comments of staff closest to the areas of focus. Specific comments are consistent with what is required in the 2005. Also handed out was a synopsis of comments on impacts, a list of literature citations that deal with roads, impacts, wildlife/habitat and recreation.

Panel #2: Question & Answers

Question - Jackson County: The board recommends the return of roadless areas to full multiple use. What changes would take place if roadless designation was removed?

Answer: Roadless areas are not being put into Wilderness. If we take the areas out of roadless designation then they are steps removed from becoming wilderness, which we are opposed to. Most people will not tear up the landscape. We need to get back to local management strategies that provide for the greater good of everyone

Question – Routt County: Emergency management person for Routt county.

Answer: We are very concerned that roadless areas in Routt county touch private land. There is also a risk of watersheds for urban areas. There needs to be a buffer at the urban interface. Something needs to get done and forest health is of concern for Routt County.

Question – Routt County: If there is a buffer between roadless and private property- would there be roads for emergency situations in there?

Answer: Asking for statutory authority to put in road during a fire. But now once private landowner mitigates, he asks why not across fence? We don't have authority to allow him to cross fence. Significant thinning necessary which requires some sort of road or access. We identified all those areas in the National fire plan. There are communities at risk, but under the current situation we cannot.

Question – Routt County: Does the 2001 rule help, if implemented properly, in the construction of roads for imminent threat situation or selective cutting to restore forest to a natural process/condition?

Answer: While the 2001 allows for those things, the real concern is about the ability for Forest Service to do those things on the ground. Ok with 2001 to start and support some type of a buffer areas.

PANEL 3: INVITED STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Rich Levy, Routt Forest Protection Group (*submitted 103 hard-copy signed petitions and a letter*) - The Routt Forest Protection Group is an ad-hoc volunteer group with participants from many different background and organizations. Leading up to the 2001 roadless rule the public

participated in huge numbers – nationwide, 1.6 million comments were received, Coloradoans submitted 96,000 comments. 90% favored protection. Since the creation of the Task Force another 16,000 similar comments have been submitted.

Routt roadless areas are extraordinarily popular for hiking, hunting, fishing, mountain biking, and snowshoeing. These outstanding natural features are a treasured resource for visitors and residents. Over 50 diverse Steamboat businesses endorse protection of the Routt NF roadless areas.

Two components of our economy is hunting and fishing. They are dependent on water quality and wildlife habitat. In 2002 hunting and fishing in Routt County provided the county with \$41 million and 560 jobs. Jackson County received \$15.4 million and 200 jobs (17.3% of jobs in Jackson County).

Roadless areas ensure water quality by acting as natural filters for organic pollutants like dust and silt caused by road building and erosion. The headwaters for major tributaries of the North Platte and Yampa Rivers are found in Routt roadless areas and the Colorado River flows through parts of the forest.

Roadless areas provide habitat important to the survival of elk, moose, mule deer, and black bear common to the Routt and appreciated by hunters, anglers and wildlife watchers. Research has found that a density of two miles of road power square mile leads to a 50% reduction in elk populations, while six miles of roads per square mile virtually eliminates all elk in that area.

Mr. Levy specifically mentioned several roadless areas: Lost Park, Pagoda Peak, Bunker Basin, Chatfiel Ras, and Troublesome. These areas contain National Scenic Trails, the City's main water supply (Fish Creek Reservoir), backdrops for Colorado's Flat Top Scenic Byway, and wildlife corridors.

The roadless rule creates ecosystem size protection without restricting recreational access. It only restricted some of the biggest impact uses: road building, timber extraction, oil and gas development and mining. The rule also provided from public health and safety; allowed FOREST SERVICE tools for fuel and fire mitigation projects.

Mr. Levy asks the Task Force to recommend protection of all roadless areas in Colorado's National Forests.

Ray Heid, Del's Triangle 3 Ranch (*no submittal*) – Mr. Heid is a sixth generation outfitter and a strong advocate for “leave no trace” and “tread lightly” use of the forests. Use of natural resources has changed so much in a lifetime; what will be left for the grand children? The Forest Service doesn't have the current budget or man power to maintain the existing roads. Yet roads are important for maintaining forest health, access for the handicapped, and access for search and rescue workers.

Brett KenCairn, Yampa Valley Community Alliance (*submitted hard-copy testimony*) - Mr. KenCairn is not only a member of the Yampa Valley Community Alliance, he is also a 20 year

practitioner of community forestry. The Yampa Valley Community Alliance with over 200 local members and part of the Western Colorado Congress. The Alliance's mission is to preserve the quality of life and the environment of the Yampa Valley through education, collaboration and active participation in local democracy.

The Alliance and Western Colorado Congress support maintaining protection for all roadless areas in the National Forests. Roadless areas serve a number of critical roles:

- Ecologically important habitats not represented in Wilderness areas. Wilderness areas are generally high elevation ecosystems that are only seasonal habitats. These species rely on unfragmented roadless areas at lower elevation to provide other critical elements necessary for survival and reproduction.
- Socio-economics of the wilderness experience, which brings millions of dollars to Colorado's local economies, particularly hunting, guiding, and other backcountry experiences.
- Budget and erosion free areas. There are enough existing roads. Due to budget cuts Forest Service is not able to maintain existing roads that leads to increase in silt in streams as roads erode, hillside fail and culverts plug and blow out. (e.g., Pagoda roadless area in South Routt. There is no coincidence that many of these areas did not get roads (due to clay soils the roads kept failing).

Mr. KenCairn presented four forbidden truths that must be acknowledged and addressed:

- 1) We are in a forest crisis – a substantial portion of our forests are dead or dying. With many areas of our forests, we need to take a hospice approach – accept the change and try to reduce the associated damage and suffering
- 2) Public agencies have been consistently and persistently defunded to incapacity – will the agency be outsourced? Will outsourcing do a better job?
- 3) Citizens need to expand beyond their special interest group – we cannot fight it out; there will be no “winner” in this conflict. We need to ALL get this right; to work it out not fight it out.
- 4) All said tonight could be irrelevant and disregarded because of the current energy policy – Forest Service has no control under the current administration and policies if they decide to start pushing mineral or oil and gas development on federal lands. Any fledgling efforts to develop collaboration will end as new domestic war of energy development begins

Remaining optimistic Mr. Ken Carin offered the following recommendations:

1. Roadless areas should be left alone (don't have the resources to deal with them anyway) and focus resources in areas to avert human and ecological tragedies. There may be a few areas at the roadless/urban interface that need to be considered for treatments.
2. Move beyond reactionary fear of the forest industry – restoration and wildfire reduction treatments are expensive, federal appropriations are shirking, we need to find some economic value in the byproducts through small, adaptive, locally-based enterprises. Develop small scale biomass facilities that can make use of the enormous volumes of low value material that need to be removed to reduce fire dangers. To establish this industry there must be a known and stable supply of materials – multi-year contracts (5-7 years).

Arizona is rebuilding industry, substantially reducing fire risk, and won support of some of the hard line environmental organizations.

3. Trust but verify - monitor what we propose to do; evaluate the effectiveness. We all need to bring insights, perspectives, information and money to the table for a functioning monitoring program.

We can't solve the roadless issue, or the larger forest health crisis from within the old setting of interest group pitted against each of. This is a common endeavor and we can learn our way out of the crisis.

Jo Stanko, local rancher (*Submitted a hard-copy letter*) – The agricultural industry contributes culturally, historically, environmentally, and economically to the state (\$16 billion annually) and to local communities. Working landscapes also impact tourism, the largest segment is the beef industry and over half the cattle graze on public lands. It important that the Task Force not create hindrances for grazing permittees to accessing lands, conducting required improvements and doing their job. Ranchers need to use motorized equipment to access and check on the condition of the range, cattle, and water sources and move cattle as necessary. Permittees may also need to build new fences and new water sources which may require temporary roads.

Ranchers and farmers play a role as stewards of out land. As one of two urban ranchers in Steamboat Springs, ranches surrounded on two or three sides by houses, Mr. Stanko is aware of the impacts. The increase and placement of roads is vitally important to the industry. He understands managing cattle to spread animals impact out and be more environmentally sound.

Mr. Stanko urged the Task Force to protect Colorado's agricultural heritage

Kent Vertrees, Blue Sky West Outfitters (*no submittal*) – Mr. Vertrees business involves snow cat tours and guiding white water and fly fishing trips. Fly fishing, in particular, allows insight into the importance of roadless areas. The goal of most his guests are to pursue wild areas, away from crowds. Currently recreation and tourism are a stable source that can drive future economies. Recreationalists are concerned they will be shut out of historically available areas, so there is a reluctance to endorse roadless areas. These are the areas Mr. Vertrees relies on to make a living.

Juggling the values of recreation, motorized recreation, water supplies, power lines, wildfires and beetles is now in the Task Forces hands. This could be a turning point in how the Forest Services manages their lands. These lands need to be managed for the future, for a good, healthy ecosystem that can be accessed.

Joe Pittington, Walden Timber Mill (*no submittal*) – Mr. Pittington grew up and watch little sawmills get pushed out by bigger mills. Currently 95% of timber is cut from private lands and only 5% from federal lands. As we have moved away from managing federal lands for timber, bugs are managing it for us. There needs to be a whole forest perspective for management and not micromanaging one spot. If we lose the timber we lose elk habitat, water supply and there will be no wildlife to manage. We don't want to wipe out the forest.

Forest products industry is the most important tool for forest management. It allow for more work to get done on the ground. Forest Service has given a good summary of the forest. The 1998 forest plan designated 59,000 acres suitable for timber. There are other areas that provide solitude wildlife view, hunting, fishing, clean water and other recreational areas, even non-roadless areas provide these opportunities.

The 2001 rule is extremely restrictive and does not allow for road construction, reconstruction or timber cuts, except in rare cases. Forest Service avoids projects in roadless areas for two reasons: 1) projects require environmental impact statements; and 2) these are most likely to be appealed.

Mr. Pittington recommends:

1. Areas that do not qualify for Wilderness status should have roadless designation.
2. Forest Service needs to be able to implement management projects in roadless areas to ensure and maintain forest health and restoration.
3. The effects of the beetle epidemic should be removed and aggressively thinned to salvage dead and dying trees and reduce the risk of catastrophic fire.
4. Authorize temporary roads to allow the industry to enter areas and remove the dead and dying trees.

Panel #3: Questions & Answers

Question – Ray Heid: What are your feelings in terms of road closures – good/bad?

Answer: This is about illegal use of ATV's due to the proliferation of camps with ATV's and users with no respect for where they ride or the damage to ecosystem (e.g., wetlands). A possible solution would be to get license plate system for ATVs and with cell phones ATV users could be more effectively monitored.

Question – Rich Levy: What is your perspective on temporary roads for fuels reductions?

Answer: There should be exceptions for fire/fuel mitigation. There are lots of different methods so there should not be a catch all. Follow the Forest Service plan and procedures, temporary routes are an option. The roadless rule should not preempt Forest Service ability to take appropriate actions.

Question – Kent Vertress: You do a lot of outfitting in roadless areas in the Routt. Have you encountered roads or trails that you understand to be unauthorized? What is your on-the-ground impression of the extent of the illegal road system?

Answer: Not sure... Road and user trails not identified by Forest Service. Local travel management plans need to identify what trails/roads are usable and what is not.

OPEN COMMENT PERIOD

28 people signed up to speak (all were called, 25 were present and spoke) on topics including: economic impacts, preservation, recreation (motorized, hunting, fishing, bicycling, hiking), multiple use, release of roadless lands to local control, balance, wildlife and watershed

protection, support of/protection of current roadless areas, watershed health, wild fire protection, and access for grazing permittee.

The comments are recorded in summary and reflect major issues, concerns, major themes, specific locations and specific actions. The following are the speakers, their organizations (if they are affiliated), their place of residence and a few of the key issues and locations they touched on:

1. Diana Eubank, Steamboat Spring, Colorado – a motorized recreation user...we all take ownership in the forest, we take pride that is our land. Roadless designation may take my land. Motorized users are good stewards, maintain trails, leave in better shape than what we found it in.
2. John Spezia, Steamboat Springs, Colorado – when you look at maps of Colorado you see few places where there are no roads. The focus is fewer roads. Roadless and wild areas give us our character and tell us who we are in the west. At 60 there may come a time when I can't get out there anymore, but I don't want roads. We need to save roadless areas for the next generations. Sent a list of all roadless areas that need to be protected. After 30 years of doing many things...roadless areas have incredible fishing, amazing hunting and wildlife habitat. These areas are my classrooms and they provide incredible vegetation, municipal water supplies, and uncompromised views and vistas. We are a tourist based economy; driven by tourism...Air quality...Silence and solitude. Protect some of our groups and species that need these areas to survive like lynx in particular. We have very little left.
3. Ron Famiglietti, Steamboat Springs, Colorado – an avid mountain biker, hiker, and snowmobile creates a unique perspective of a motorized/non user. Non-motorized users look for quiet. When I'm on an ATV, hikers don't bug me. But when hiking, skiing, motor users noticeable. We have plenty of places for motorized recreation; we don't need anymore. Encourage the Task Force to keep our roadless areas roadless.
4. Ken Roach, Steamboat Springs, Colorado - not an avid dirt bike rider, but I am a motor vehicle users. Motorists are often personified as terrorists who litter, as an enjoyer of the forest, we respect it a lot, respect rail system by staying on trails. There are a few bad apples, but I honestly believe they are far and few. OHV users respect the National Forest, and support the trail system, pay fees to build and maintain these trails. We are the only ones who have to pay for service through an OHV sticker program. We are not the enemy, but friends of the forest. Zerkel area is only accessible by foot or horse. We fear someday a blanket will be placed over national forests to exclude motorized use. Against roadless areas. OHV users should not be penalized.
5. Amy Gregorich, Oak Creek, Colorado - use forest for recreation, mountain biking, hiking, skiing dirt-biking and live near a roadless area. Recommend releasing roadless areas to forest service management in order to best address changing needs. Current roadless areas have roads, used for recreation and management...manage for historic use. Continuing roadless designation will hamper proper management. Need to manage forest when changes occur. Recommend Colorado's roadless areas be released to be managed by local forest services travel management plans.

6. Sandra Knox, rancher, Coalmont, Colorado - represents ranch in Jackson county... Family makes a living in the Oak Park area for over 100 years...now there is less than 10% of number of cattle my grandfather ran in that area. Now grass is waist high, which is a fire hazard. Perhaps more cattle need to be put in there and monitored to ensure not over grazing...father and grand father ran a very small logging operation back then. One instruction passed onto me was that we need to cut heavy into old timber on north sides of our lot so that snow would have a place to land on ground and not evaporate into air which left water for late July and August. Nowadays, water runs out mid-June/late-July...beaver ponds are already dried up because timber is so thick no snow gets to ground. A study on how to preserve water on mountains found that by opening areas in forest is allows snow to come down and doesn't all melt in middle of May and June. Present management needs to change dramatically. Most of our forests will be lost to fires like in 1880's . Why don't we close it all off, let it burn, wait 70-80 years and see healthy forest? We need to leave our great grandchildren something... We need common sense that will help the forest live again and be useful to all citizens.
7. Jerry Nettleton, Steamboat Springs, Colorado - there are two ends of spectrum - closed or open. The answer will shake out in-between. Answer is based on effective management. In my day job, I'm interested in resource development and very concerned about anything that would lock up. Effective management is the key and it can be done. I manage sixty square miles of some of the most productive land. Reclaimed areas have roads, and we manage access there for grazing. Also concerned about access for handicapped hunters during the fall. Many are veterans who have served their country. Ask that you look at lands we are talking about. Forest Service EIS-if we do go with full roadless limitations about 50% of our forest lands would be restricted. In looking at uses that would occur in wilderness and roadless areas would amount to 19% of people locked out. This is not responsible stewardship.
8. Allen Reishus, Friends of North-West Colorado, Craig, Colorado – a Moffat County group formed to represent quiet uses, promote open space and keep it available for hiking, fishing, hunting, backpacking, and kayaking quietly. In Moffat County we have deteriorating opportunities for quiet recreating. BLM used to be perfect, but quietness is gone with exploration and unregulated motorized recreation in these lands. We support roadless areas protection; need better roads; better trail-heads. Economics is very important in our counties - Moffat big game hunters are about 50,000 folks annual. There is a connection between roadless areas and elk - big game needs reservoirs, a place that is quiet. Studies show an increase in road mile density impacts elk population with drops precipitously. Protection of elk is important for local communities. Roadless or lightly roaded is a benefit tour economy, peace of mind.
9. Bob Reilley, North Routt Fire Protection District, Clark, Colorado – is Chief of the North Routt Fire District... Areas adjacent to communities of north routt (e.g., subdivisions Steamboat Lake. We're going to have a beetle problem up there. Forest Service has to have ability to get in and manage timber adjacent to those private properties. We want to buffer or mitigate fire prevention areas, but this is a fast growing community. North Routt Fire Protection District is doing fire protection work, but on the other side of line in roadless areas that work is not getting done. Give managers opportunities to do the work so the next big fire won't burn up homes and hurt people.

10. Caitlyn Patrick, Steamboat Springs, Colorado - works with a Routt County volunteer group that conducts community outreach on the roadless issue. There is support for protecting and preserving Routt national forest and solitude. Routt national forest is source of water for much of western states - responsible to keep the highest quality. Wildlife needs to be managed and prohibits future road building. Tourism is year round and a delicate balance between visitors and pristine environment need to be maintain. Future road building will upset this balance. I'm an avid rock climber, we have beautiful hikes in all these areas, wonderful solitude that I enjoy but want future generations to enjoy too. Ask Task Force to recommend the national forest be preserved in most natural state. We have a responsibility for future generations.
11. Andy Gold, Tabernash, Colorado – it is clear that local elected officials have different concerns, safety, economics or recreation-all valid. Propose third option- allow counties a degree of local control to determine amount of roadless and wildenesss in their county. They should ask for DOW advice. Could be a local control issue vs state or fed government.
12. Lester Crawford, Oak Creek, Colorado – people have a right to ride in the forest. Lot of proposed areas are not roadless at all. Misinformation about roadless areas being pristine. Re-designating roadless areas are a prelude to more constraints.
13. Matthew Garrington, Environment Colorado, Denver, Colorado - supports protection of all roadless areas. Unfortunately user groups are pitted against each other – all use is possible. We have concern over illegal roads, would recommend release of OHV issue to national travel management plan...only 14% of IRA's nationally are considered to be high fire risk. The Forest Service states that in 2000 when roading was allowed in areas under 1000 acres, commercial logging does not necessarily equate to fire protection, but can increase risk because large diameter trees, which might otherwise slow or prevent, are removed. 90% of comments you're received favor protection, listen to hearts and minds. Recommend Task Force protect all roadless areas.
14. Ty Wattenberg, North Park Stockgruers, Walden, Colorado - the North Park Stockgr?? oppose any additional roadless in boundaries in Jackson County because roadless areas have limited access, there has been a lot beetle kill, agriculture needs and concerns, irrigation ditch maintenance is hindered, and limitations on mineral and energy resource development. We believe firmly in the multiple use concept... Additional roadless areas will make the Routt just another wilderness areas.
15. Reed Morris, Steamboat Springs, Colorado – urge the Task Force to protect all roadless areas in the Routt and in Colorado. There is also an obligation to protect multiple use and diverse recreation opportunities. Ask Forest Service how to manage the motorized and non-motorized issues. Provide diverse recreational opportunities and protections for water quality and wildlife. Strongly urge the Task Force to send a strong message that roadless conservation rule had it right and needs to be protected for diverse opportunities to abound.
16. Gary Eubank, Steamboat Springs, Colorado – a third generation local and business owner. Don't support the Steamboat Springs city council letter. Their initiative puts us on slippery slope to closures. No one wants roads hacked through forest. It is Forest Service's job to help manage forest. Roadless is just another layer on top that the forest service has to manage. Why do we add this layer of bureaucracy to what's already there? Why can't they maintain the forest? To enact a closure in roadless areas hampers everyone's use of the forest, whether

for recreational or business purposes. Instead of closing more down areas, find sources of funding so that the Forest Service can manage it.

17. Leslie Steen, Steamboat Springs, Colorado – experience recreating in roadless areas. Roadless areas are important for the community - economic impacts is the most telling argument. Our community and Colorado depend on benefits of maintaining those areas of roadless. Urge Task Force to protect and maintain roadless areas as they now exist. Opponents to roadless areas often have misinformation. Having read the roadless rule, it is sensible. It preserves vital resources for the long term and provides necessary flexibility for fire mitigations and other things of that nature. Continued protections.
18. Vernon Cecil, Colorado Blizzards Snowmobile Club, Greeley, Colorado - Outdoors family...we are talking about freedoms. Watched as little areas become restricted. After 69 years those little bits adds up to a lot. I'm a conservationist and want to see things taken care of. In one case there is no irrigation water (have had to augment supply 100%) because 5 or 6 people protest. Five groups shut things down and hold things up...Just a few people control what is going on. What will it be like for my grandchildren, they should be able to go out and enjoy the forest. We got a few bad apples, everyone every group does. Part of it is education. Would hate to see more roadless areas.
19. Bill Rexferd, Colorado Blizzards Snowmobile Club, Windsor, Colorado - representing a recreational group on the Front Range. There's more than one way to close a forest...Let it die...which will reduce desire of public to use it. I strongly support maintaining a healthy forest. One good way to do that is to manage with logging or other historic uses. In the long run, this would do the better job. Maintaining watersheds, particularly for Steamboat. If changes aren't made the forest will die along with the watershed. Takes an active forest to maintain watershed. Roadless areas become designated as Wilderness, but no areas have been released from roadless. As to license plates, we have registration stickers. If they won't do that, why would they buy license plates? We all like quiet areas, closing roads down doesn't necessarily mean it will be quiet. If you want a quiet area, just hike a few yards away.
20. Craig Mueller, Colorado Blizzards Snowmobile Club, Fort Collins, Colorado - Came tonight to learn more, and about the Task Force's task. Two main responsibilities stand out - first to recommend to the governor whether to reinstate 2001 rule or eliminate it altogether; second to recommend how best to manage lands. Common themes mentioned - supporting good stewardship, retain, improved resources, better management of forest lands, noted lack of Forest Service funding. From these themes it is difficult to reach conclusions on the roadless rule. Routt Forest Supervisor wasn't clear whether to reinstate or eliminate the 2001 rule and said they concentrate resources in non roadless areas. This constitutes an excuse for Forest Service to shirk responsibilities; by continuing the roadless rule, Forest Service continues to shirk active management of forest as a whole. Roadless rule means shirking responsibilities.
21. Dave Hendrix, Walden Snowsnakes Snowmobile Club, Walden, Colorado - Cross country skiers and fishermen are the biggest part of his motorized business clients. Don't want anymore of forests shut down.
22. Mark Hartless, CSA/Routt Powder Riders, Steamboat Springs, Colorado - represent a Colorado snowmobile association and a Routt County snowmobile club...recomend lifting roadless restriction from the Routt and White River National Forests and oppose any additional roadless or wilderness designations. Roadless fails to strike appropriate balance.

Carefully consider the County Commissioners recommendations. Roadless areas wrongly tie the hands of local forest rangers. Remove roadless status, allow forest to be managed on local level.

23. Lucy Meyring, Colorado Cattlemen, Walden, Colorado – a rancher from North Park and past president of Colorado Cattlemen Association...From the association there should be no written roadless policy and no further designated wilderness areas. Roadless areas do have some roads which need to remain open for grazing permittees to conduct necessary improvements. One step further, without access and the ability to maintain grazing permits we tread on non-NEPA compliance. It is imperative the Task Force knows that it is critical to a rancher's way of life and permit to have access to maintain structures on permits. The North Park community is dying and ranching is only thing left. Beseech you to answer the needs of people of north west Colorado.
24. Roger Steen, Steamboat Springs, Colorado - Urge the Task Force to recommend preservation to maximum roadless areas. From economic perspective, tourism provides revenue for the state and in Routt county and is drawn to the area because of roadless opportunities...people from all over the world come to visit. Roadless areas are renewable economic resources. Wise to preserve them.
25. Diane Brower, Steamboat Springs, Colorado - strongly support maintaining existing roadless areas that allow protection of developments near the National Forest. Cutting forests in order to accommodate urban interface seems a backward way of dealing with the problem. Counties should zone those areas to protect potential developments that put people in danger. Doesn't make sense to cut down the forests that new residents moved there for. Lots of people talking about their love of motorized recreation, numbers of people doing this are burgeoning. We only have so much land that has biological integrity because it hasn't been impacted by roads. When do we stop encroaching on those areas? Eventually we will have no land unimpacted by roads left. Struck by comments of gentlemen from Division of Wildlife, letters from biologists, they know what the problems are with cutting away of land with ecological integrity...getting to point of no return...need biological intact systems. Hope that you take carefully our charge to consider what is best for the National Forest. Scientists and biologist telling you there is a need to maintain roadless areas. Too many people impacting National Forests, now we need to maintain what we have left.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A: Overview of Written Public Comments Received at the Steamboat Springs Public Comment Meeting

This document is a rough, broad-based overview of the themes expressed in the written comments received at the public comment meeting. This information is for summation purposes only, and should not be viewed as an empirical, scientific content analysis.

		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Number of responses:	43		
Number of CO residents	43		
Number of non-CO residents	0		
Responses by forest	General Comment	11	26%
	Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forests	3	7%
	Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre-Gunnison National Forests	2	5%
	Manti-La Sal National Forests	2	5%
	Pike-San Isabel National Forests	2	5%
	Rio Grande National Forest	2	5%
	Routt National Forest	37	86%
	San Juan National Forest	2	5%
	White River National Forest	3	7%
	Responses by topic of concern	Social and Economic Value	10
Special Designations		5	12%
Recreation Management		28	65%
Natural Resource Management		16	37%
Other: (see below for specific responses)		12	28%

APPENDIX A

Comment Themes

Please note that any single comment may touch on more than one of the comment themes below and is recorded as such.

Comment Themes Indicating a Preferred Action	Number of Responses
Defer to 2001 Rule/Preserve Roadless Areas	13
Defer to Forest Management Plan	3
Retain Motorized Recreation	7
Retain Non-Motorized Recreation	2

General Comment Themes	Number of Responses
General	10
Public Involvement/Collaboration and Decision-Making Process	2
Environmental Emphasis	12
Multiple Use Management Emphasis	9
Special Designations	3
Job Creation/Economic Stability of Rural Communities, States, and the Nation	4
Legacy Values	4
Quality of Life	1
Use of Roadless Areas to Promote or Subsidize Industry	3
Reallocating Costs of Roadless Area Development to Meet Other Needs	1
Other Social and Economic Values	1

Responses by Topic of Concern: Other, please specify

1. Enjoying the land for what it is
2. General freedom
3. Meeting format
4. No more Wilderness
5. Open all roads
6. Our paradigm regarding all this
7. Preservation of our forests for their own inherent value
8. Public access & rangeland
9. roads built pre-1906
10. The need for public use by all groups
11. Wilderness protection and wildlife protection; all certainly apply, but to maintain areas in which so few are left--to really call wilderness--the WILD
12. Wildlife