



**Roadless Areas Review Task Force  
Monte Vista Public Comment Meeting  
Bill Metz Central Auditorium  
545 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Monte Vista, Colorado**

**June 7, 2006  
5:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.**

**5:00 pm Welcome and Introductions**

**5:10 Panel #1: Forest Service:** Peter Clark, Forest Supervisor & Bob Dalrymple, Planner  
*(20 minute presentation, 20 minutes Q&A)*

**5:50 Panel #2: State and Local Government** *(35 minutes, 15 minutes Q&A)*

- Colorado Division of Wildlife – Jim Goodyear *(15 min)*
- Saguache County Commissioner - Sam Pace *(10 min)*
- Mineral County Commissioner - Zeke Ward *(10 min)*

**6:40 Panel #3: Stakeholder Groups** *(7 minutes per speaker, 15 minutes Q&A)*

- Dennis Shephard, past SLV OHV user group, South Fork
- Christine Canaly, SLV Ecosystem Council
- Butch Rawls, Mountain Trails Outfitters
- Steve Vandiver, Rio Grande Water Conservation District
- Doug Shriver, farmer & water board member
- Brett Shawcroft, rancher

**7:35 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**

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**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



**Roadless Areas Review Task Force  
Monte Vista – Public Comment Meeting  
June 7, 2006  
Bill Mertz Central Auditorium  
545 Second Avenue  
Monte Vista, Colorado**

**DRAFT Meeting Summary**

**PANEL #1: FOREST SERVICE (FS)**

Peter Clark, Forest Supervisor presented information on the Rio Grande National Forest.

*General Information*

- Rio Grande National Forest is located four hours from Denver and Albuquerque
- 1.8 million acres surrounding the San Luis Valley, the largest high elevation valley in America
- The areas has been multiple use for thousands of years
- Most areas in the Forest, including Wilderness and Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA), show the mark of man

*The Forest is known for:*

- Water
  - o Important for San Luis Valley agricultural and domestic uses
  - o Headwaters for the Rio Grande –a vital river for Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico
  - o Current management of the Forest ensures both quantity and quality are maintained
- Wilderness - approximately 23% (430,000 acres) lie within four Wilderness areas – Weminuche, La Garita, Sangre De Cristo, South San Juan
- Recreation opportunities
  - o A major hunting destination
  - o Most common recreation activity on the forest is driving for pleasure - a greater percentage of visitors use OHVs than any other forest in the state
  - o Wolf Creek Ski Area is advertised as receiving the most snow in Colorado
  - o 170 miles of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and 81 miles of the Colorado Trail
- Fish and wildlife
  - o Excellent habitat for a wide variety of wildlife – because of this DOW re-introduced moose in the area in the early 90's and is the core reintroduction area for Canada lynx
  - o Elk populations draw hunters and provide significant economic benefits to the San Luis Valley and the state
  - o Management for the Rio Grande cutthroat trout helps prevent its listing as Threatened and Endangered

- A balance of sustained multiple uses - managed for a variety for sustainable multiple uses; the Forest Plan maintains a balance between Wilderness, Backcountry and more intensively managed areas

#### *Forest Plan*

- The Forest Plan was signed in 1996 and provides overall management direction
- Serves as the Forest Service contract with the general public and forest stakeholders and a promise to future generations
- Built collectively with the public and Forest Service
- 5 years in development with extensive public involvement
- During Plan development, the public indicated the Forest Plan was providing the right balance of resource allocations: 51% of lands are in no road construction/non-development management prescription areas, 49% of lands are in areas that allow road construction/development
- Within 100 miles of the Forest is 2.3 million acres of Wilderness or wilderness study areas

#### *Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA)*

- IRAs are currently managed to provide benefits to wildlife, fish, and other resource values and were an important consideration in the revised Forest Plan
- Forest Plan analyzed 53 roadless areas which comprised about 530,000 acres (29% of the forest)
- Activities in these areas must be consistent with the objectives set by the Forest Plan
- 83% of the IRA lands are in management prescription areas which do not allow road construction; 17% (93,000 acres) are in areas that allow some degree of road construction
- Any road construction project proposed in IRAs requires detailed analysis, including public and other agency involvement
- Roads do exist in IRAs – there is 34 miles of roads in IRAs (15 open, 19 closed) and 207 miles of motorized trails

#### *Today's Issues (not significant at the time of the Forest Plan Revision)*

- Energy Development
  - o Forest Plan controls where and how oil and gas leasing can occur
  - o Leasing interest has increased dramatically in the last three months – 104 nomination, some within IRAs
- Forest Insect and disease epidemics
  - o More than was foreseen in the Forest Plan
  - o Extended drought conditions have increased this activity and resulted in significant tree mortality
  - o The size and severity of the outbreaks are beyond those predicted in the Forest Plan
  - o Spruce bark beetle is of great concern with much infestation in IRAs
- Wildland Fire and Fuels Management

- Extended drought with insect and disease mortality and dense forest conditions add to the risk of catastrophic fire
  - June 2002 – the Million Fire burned over 9,000 acres, destroyed 11 homes and damaged 6 more
  - Fuels management was not recognized as a key issue in 1996
  - The wildland-urban interface is increasing as private land adjacent to the Forest is being developed
- Unpredictable catastrophic events - Forest Plan proved management flexibility necessary to deal with unpredicted catastrophic events, including those in IRAs – example: 1997 windstorm caused 600 acres of wind-throw including 60 acres in an IRA. Concerned about the wind-throw contributing to a spruce bark beetle outbreak, threatening adjacent Wilderness, Forest Service built a temporary road to remove the wind-throw, reforested the area and obliterated the temporary road. To date the project has prevented a major beetle outbreak in the area. The project required a detailed analysis, extensive public involvement, and an amendment to the Plan

#### *Conclusion*

- For today's issues and unforeseen issues the Forest Supervisor needs flexibility to adapt and manage
- The current Forest Plan provides the Forest Service with the flexibility necessary to deal with the evolving issues and public concern

#### ***Questions & Answers for Panel #1***

*Question* – When will the Forest Plan be revised?

*Answer* – The revision and analysis process is scheduled for 2007.

*Question* – Is the Forest Service able to manage IRAs for wildlife values?

*Answer* – Yes, with the current flexibility.

*Question* – What IRAs are at risk of insect or disease outbreaks? Is it significant?

*Answer* – Forest Service will get that information. The aerial overflights shown on the maps indicate significant outbreaks. The special concern is spruce bark beetle, which is all over the forest in the spruce stands.

*Question* – What is the status on combating the beetle outbreak?

*Answer* – All timber projects are salvage operations, which will control the bigger outbreaks. Currently, there are no salvage activities in roadless areas. To do salvage in IRA would require a Plan amendment.

*Question* – Describe the roads in IRAs (34 miles of roads).

*Answer* - Many of the roads remaining in IRAs were in-holdings and others were existing roads. The criteria for the definition of a “road” is outlined in the Forest Service handbook.

*Question* – Are any of the recent oil and gas nominations in IRAs?

*Answer* – Yes, but they have not expressed interest in surface occupancy.

*Question* – Where is the overlap between IRAs and outbreak areas and where would Forest Service want to take action first?

*Answer* – Each situation would have to be analyzed separately. Outbreaks in IRAs are more of a priority, particularly when backcountry infestation would threaten Timber management prescription or wilderness areas.

*Question* – How does the 2001 rule and the Forest Plan compare on the amount of flexibility for the Forest Supervisor?

*Answer* – Peter Clark has been at the Rio Grand National Forest for six and a half years. The effect of the 2001 rule was not significant on his Forest. Management problems would increase management problems if IRAs became de facto wilderness, particularly for unanticipated events.

*Question* – Are there water conflicts in IRAs? Would the 2001 rule affect those conflicts?

*Answer* – Don't know of any conflicts with water facilities in IRAs.

*Question* – Would the time delay, necessary to gather analysis and public comment, cause additional issues for managing in IRAs?

*Answer* – The time delay would not specifically cause additional issues. Forest Service has made it work and was satisfied with the how things played out with the wind-throw salvage and temporary road example mentioned earlier.

*Question* – Does the 17% of IRA lands under management that allows some degree of road construction include temporary roads?

*Answer* – Cannot imagine anything in an IRA but a temporary road, but don't know. Forest Service will get that information to the Task Force

## **PANEL #2: STATE AND LOCAL**

**Division of Wildlife, Jim Goodyear** (*submitted letters, IRA synopsis and CD*) – Mr. Goodyear presented general comments on the Rio Grande National Forest and then focused on aquatic issues. Mr. Goodyear reviewed the Record of Decision, Forest Plan and Final Environmental Impact statement for the Rio Grande and presented the Task Force with a brief summary on different issues:

- Timber – the plan designates 291,000 acres of land suitable and scheduled for timber management...23% of the Rio Grande Forest is aspen and 83% of the aspen stands are older than 76 years but none are older than 170 years...many of the aspen stands are converting to conifer species
- Grazing – the Plan designates 577,000 acres suitable for grazing, which meets the needs of permittees
- Oil and Gas – the 1996 plan anticipated only 220 acres being developed for oil and gas but designated 61% of the forest suitable...normally the forest receive3s only a handful of applications, over the past few months the Forest has received over 100 applications

- Recreation – the plan provides a broad range of outdoor recreations and recommends 14 streams for consideration for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River system; it does not recommend any Wilderness areas.
- Unraoded Areas – The Plan manages unraoded areas using backcountry prescription which allows multiple season, multiple use motorized and non-motorized opportunities. Category 3 comprises approximately 25% of the forest (all IRAs are in category 3 but not all category 3 areas are IRAs).
- Category 5 is the largest category on the Rio Grande at 37% - this category does not appear to jeopardize OHV use or access.

Mr. Goodyear spoke about the importance of biodiversity to provide habitat and maintain viable populations. The Record of Decision mentions two different scales of monitoring – a fine filter focused on particular plant and wildlife species and a coarse filter focused on tracking changes in gross habitat conditions.

Five laws sets the legal framework regarding water issues:

- 1) Organic administration act – recognizes watersheds as systems that have to be managed with care
- 2) Clean Water Act – designed to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the nation’s waters
- 3) National Forest Management Act of 1976 – one purpose is to prevent watershed conditions from being irreversibly damaged
- 4) Endangered Species Act – conserve threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems they depend upon
- 5) Safe Drinking Water Act – federal agencies with jurisdiction over any federally owned/maintained public water systems to comply with all authorities (this means Colorado has the responsibility to ensure clean water

Mr. Goodyear presented some background information on water issues:

- Surface water comes predominately from snowmelt runoff from the Sangre de Cristo and San Juan Mountains
- This water is used by Colorado, New Mexico and Texas according to the 1938 Rio Grande compact
- The Rio Grande National Forest has 75 lakes, 1810 miles of perennial streams of which 1050 miles support/contain trout
- Roads are the largest contributor of sediment in the forest
- 960 miles of roads are within 100 feet of stream channels and many have poorly designed stream crossings
- People object to road closures and relocated roads are expensive, but proper drainage can help minimize damage
- Native cutthroat trout are directly dependent on Forest Service lands throughout the entire State of Colorado

**Saguache County Commissioner, Sam Pace** (*submitted hard copy testimony*) - Mr. Pace mentioned the importance of supporting the National Forest and other public lands personnel because of the very positive contribution they make to the community. He

urged elected leaders to respect the local expertise, listen to it and stop outsourcing the work. The rules created should guide and allow the flexibility to do the job right.

The economy is changing, moving away from ranching due to drought, or expense of ranching outweighs the benefits of subdividing for development. This is why Mr. Pace is in favor of keep roadless areas roadless. In the long term these areas will benefit the economy and future generations.

Hunters and anglers bring 1.5 to 2.3 billion dollars into state and local economies. One presentation Mr. Pace attended showed that hunting and fishing bring in as much as the ski industry. At another conference a presenter showed the impacts and trends of economic change in the west and maintained that preserving roadless areas was a strong positive for long term economic growth.

Other points Mr. Pace presented:

- Grazing and use of water from our National Forest lands are essential to many ranchers and these are better protected by roadless areas
- County Commissioner's job is to improve the economy
- Difficult to find funding to maintain existing roads
- County residents constantly complain about the dust from dirt roads
- 90% of fires are started by humans and over half within a stones throw of a road

Mr. Pace supports roadless areas and a roadless rule that allows for management of emergency situations, ecosystem maintenance and fire mitigation. He supports roadless because in his belief it is best for the land, wildlife and the overall economic health of our community and the citizens of Saguache County.

**Mineral County Commissioner, Zeke Ward** (*no submittal*) – Mr. Ward reflected that residents in Mineral County subscribe to every view point presented during the Task Force process to date, from the desire for all Wilderness to the desire for all lands to be accessible for all recreational uses. Mineral County Commissioners discussed roadless areas, but due to time limitations no agreement was reached. Mr. Ward did present several general priorities the Commissioners share.

First, the Commissioners support continuing multiple use management. Second, the Commissioners felt strongly that flexibility in management was the key to healthy forests and healthy local communities. Things come up that cannot be anticipated and Forest Service needs the flexibility to manage the resource in a manner necessary at the time. Flexibility in management will help preserve the existing forest and use consistent with multiple use.

Mr. Ward recognizes that we learn as we go (e.g., cutthroat trout – mistakenly brookies and browns were introduced, they were larger and out competed cutthroat trout) and that forests need to be accessible to provide people the opportunity to experience the inherent values in preserving wild places.

Forest Service has asked for the County's help to limit the sedimentation of roads that end up in streams by limiting the width of the road. A good tool would be to have a proper mixture of materials to compact the surface. Flexibility would allow Forest Service managers to improve on current methods.

### *Panel #2 Questions & Answer*

*Question – Saguache County* – Does Saguache County has a resolution on the Roadless issue?

*Answer* – Commissioners did not have the opportunity to discuss it before tonight's meeting, but they will have a resolution in the future.

*Question – DOW* – To clarify, DOW supports continuation of 2001 rule? If yes, how would DOW recommend changes to allow for management of imminent threats (in the 2001 rule) and insect and disease (not in the 2001 rule)?

*Answer* – DOW does support the idea of continuing the 2001 rule with clarifications. Mr. Goodyear will provide further information on how DOW would recommend addressing imminent threats, insects and disease.

*Question – DOW* – How does DOW reconcile lots of motorized use with preservation of habitat and DOW's statement that roads have the biggest effect on habitat deterioration?

*Answer* – It is hard to have a one size fits all solution. DOW looks at the latest research and tries to balance protection of habitat fragmentation with other needs.

*Question – DOW* – Clarification – the majority of cut throat habitat occurs in roadless & wilderness areas?

*Answer* – Yes

*Question – DOW* – Can DOW provide citations/numbers for stream crossing in other forests?

*Answer* – This information comes from the Forest Service, in particular the stream crossing data. The data for the Rio Grande National Forest came from the 1996 Forest Plan revision process EIS document.

*Question – Mineral County* – Would Mineral County residents look favorably on grazing on Forest Service lands, recognizing there is short term ugliness for long term beauty (grazing looks dry and barren but grows back lush)?

*Answer* – Yes, understanding short term ugliness for long term health is about education (getting past the brief ugliness and get to results then it is worth is).

*Question – DOW* – What data does DOW have on the cause of the degradation of cutthroat trout; how much from the introduction of other species; how much from sedimentation?

*Answer* – DOW will gather the data and get back to the Task Force.

*Question – DOW – Would DOW support modification to the 2001 rule to allow for greater flexibility of the Forest Service to provide water and continuous supply of timber as stipulated in their organic act?*

*Answer – Where the 2001 rule needs clarification it is important to do so.*

*Question – DOW – What exceptions to the 2001 rule does DOW support? What clarifications to the 2001 rule does DOW suggest?*

*Answer – DOW will gather that information and provide it to the Task Force.*

*Question – Saguache and Mineral County – What are the impacts of roadless areas on the forest products industry?*

*Answer – Mr. Ward said that there have been some impacts, like the blow-downs that created salvage projects. It took a long time to get one particular project started because of the EIS process, and the time it took to build the temporary road, but the project was able to arrest a serious infestation. A mandate for no roads would increase the impacts. Mr. Pace agreed that there were impacts.*

### **PANEL #3: INVITED STAKEHOLDERS**

**Dennis Shepherd** (*submitted written testimony and a map*) – Mr. Shepherd is past president of a San Luis Valley OHV user group and made three points for Task Force consideration:

1. Big meadows reservoir and campground – Mr. Shepherd questioned the correctness of the map. Is the Big Meadows reservoir in an IRA?
2. FSR rerouting – Mr. Shepherd ask what is retained in inventory? This is a minor road that is to be closed and rerouted along an old logging road. He asked if a road is not on the map it is not a road?
3. Wolf Creek Pass Play Area success – Mr. Shepherd presented a successful collaborative effort on the part of different user groups to resolve the conflict in the Wolf Creek area. He suggested that the same method of working together to resolve issues on a specific area should be used.

**Christine Canaly, San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council** (*submitted hardcopy testimony, including maps*) - The San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council (SLVEC) is a local advocacy organization, whose mission is to protect and restore – through research, education and advocacy – the biological diversity, ecosystems, and natural resources of the Upper Rio Grande bioregion, balancing ecological values and human needs.

SLVEC is concerned about the impacts of recreational activities, especially a growing concern about the exponential growth in the use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) on public lands in recent years. In response to this concern SLVEC has inventoried almost half a million acres on the Rio Grand National Forest, assisting in developing and providing mapping support and baseline data for public lands managers.

First and foremost, IRAs protect biodiversity, which is important to SLVEC as stewards of Headwater regions. SLVEC has longstanding involvement in water issues in the San

Luis Valley. They are concerned with the rim that surrounds the valley, the roaded areas and the impacts of the resulting sediment.

SLVEC is concerned with inconsistencies in IRA boundaries. One example is the proposed Rock Creek Timber Spruce Beetle Salvage, the revised Forest Plan reflected different boundaries than the IRA boundaries (Bennett/Blowout/Willow Creek IRAs; 93,000 acres). The proposed timber sale was withdrawn because of the Task Force process and uncertainty about the best way to proceed.

SLVEC supports the roadless conservation rule and a prohibition on new road building in IRAs. Some of the reasons for the support include: 75% of the roads and trails are already open to motorized traffic; Forest Service does not have the funds to adequately enforce its own rules; and for 1.8 million acres Forest Service has two law enforcement personnel.

**Butch Rawls, Mountain Trails Outfitters** (*no submittal*) – Mr. Rawls has been an outfitter guide on the National Forest for 22 years. He is also on the San Luis Valley Conservation Board. Mr. Rawls and the outfitters industry support no new roads. IRAs provide quality hunting opportunities and need to be in place to protect the outfitting industry. Hunters don't want to cross roads while hunting

Mr. Rawls recognizes that no roads may be impractical when faced with the challenges of managing for disease, insects and fire. Forest Service needs the flexibility to put in temporary roads for management issues. Therefore, Mr. Rawls advocated for no new roads unless necessary. If Forest Service has to establish a new road it should be temporary and immediately closed/removed/restored absolutely (with a bulldozer, not just a sign and wire).

**Steve Vandiver, Rio Grande Water Conservation District** (*submitted written testimony*) – Mr. Vandiver is the general manager for the Conservation district, prior to this he spent three years with Colorado Division of Water Resources. It is difficult to speak specifically to water issues in roadless areas, but there are a number of existing water facilities in the forest, and several in roadless areas. Access to these facilities is by horse trail during run-off season. Mr. Vandiver is not currently aware of any specific conflicts between IRAs and water facilities.

The history of the Rio Grande basin includes the development of an agreement several years ago with downstream states about how much water can be used in the basin. Because of this agreement there is no room for new facilities – existing surface water is already accounted for. There are proposed enlargements, to store non-native waters and are viable if done correctly, but these are not in roadless or wilderness areas.

Mr. Vandiver does not want to see an absolute moratorium on roads in roadless areas because we don't know what the future holds. There may be needs and issues that come up due to societal growth and would not want to see absolute prohibition of development in roadless areas. The biggest concern is for watershed management and health – things will need to be done to ensure the water is coming out of the National Forest continues to

flow. The drought has tightened belts and it is important to have flexibility for Forest Service to manage the forest and watershed.

**Doug Shriver, farmer & water board member** (*no submittal*) – Mr. Shriver is a member of many organizations. He believes the Rio Grand National Forest is a valuable asset. He supports the idea that local professionals need flexibility to develop solutions to specific issues; the one-size- fits-all approach has led to bad decisions in the past. Mr. Shriver suggests that local interests need to sit down and develop solutions.

Mr. Shriver's concern is that the biggest sediment impacts to the watershed came from the thousand fire which exceeded the sediment loads from roads. He is concerned about road constructed in inappropriate areas which can cause damage. Flexibility of the FS is important to be able to react appropriately in order to protect the forest and for the economic contribution the forest makes to local economies.

All interests in the areas should be considered before making decisions, therefore Mr. Shriver recommends handing decisions to local professionals. He asks the Task Force to not tie Forest Service and local professionals' hand with rigid rules.

**Brett Shawcroft, Public Lands Council and rancher** (*submitted written testimony*) – Mr. Shawcroft is a fourth generation rancher from Alamosa. His family has resided in the San Luis Valley for over 100 years. Mr. Shawcroft is chairman of the Public Lands council and served on the Board of Directors. He is also chairmen of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association's Federal Lands Committee. The Public Lands Council is an organization that represents public land grazing permittees. This group deals only with issues that affect public lands ranchers. Mr. Shawcroft expressed his own views as a grazing permit holder during his presentation.

Mr. Shawcroft holds grazing permits on both Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands and is concerned about roadless areas. Ranchers and permittees have various range improvement requirements which include fencing to restrict movement of livestock, water developments, holding pens, and range analysis plots. There are also other projects such as reseeding and weed control that needs to be done in certain areas for different reasons. The Federal agencies require permit holders to maintain these improvements on a regular basis, and this sometimes requires access road to move materials, supplies, and equipment.

Occasionally there are emergency situations that require immediate access; such as if a water tank breaks down during the peak of the summer, in 100 degree weather, and cattle have no other place to drink. Mr. Shawcroft offered his personal experience with having to retrieve sick or seriously injured cattle or horses that would have died without the ability to get a trailer into the area to haul them to the veterinary.

Mr. Shawcroft does most of his work on horse back and so has no problem with roadless designations, however it is important that grazing permittees have continued, unencumbered access to perform the tasks necessary and are required by their permits.

Mr. Shawcroft is concerned that roadless areas might be managed as de facto wilderness. Wilderness areas are required to go through the proper channels with scientific review to ensure the mandatory values exist and all concerns are addressed, including Congressional review.

### ***Panel #3 Questions & Answers***

*Question – Brett Shawcroft, rancher – Is the current access sufficient?*

*Answer – Current access is sufficient, but no one can see into the future, so there needs to be flexibility to respond to unforeseen events.*

*Question – Brett Shawcroft, rancher – Do you have grazing permits in roadless areas? Can permittees in IRAs get permission to go into those areas?*

*Answer – Mr. Shawcroft does not currently have permits in roadless areas. He did have an experience with an area where a road has been closed and he needed access. He went to Forest Service and received a special permit. The concern with special permits is the possible long delay; can get caught up in red tape.*

*Question – Steve Vandiver, Water Conservation District – Are there any problems with the conveyances from the San Juan to Rio Grande? Could Forest Service address maintenance issues?*

*Answer – There are seven diversions into the Rio Grande and two going out (into the Arkansas). All for them are within the forest and all need maintenance. Most maintenance is done with a pick and shovel. When the need for more major repairs arose Forest Service was allowed access. It took a long time, but the work was completed. DOW owns many of the diversions. There needs to be flexibility to maintain the ditches and not a prohibition on access.*

*Question – Christine Canaly, SLVEC – What is the difference between Forest Service’s inventoried roadless areas and SLVEC’s inventoried roadless areas?*

*Answer – SLVEC looked for roadlessness on the ground, for connectivity and areas with less than 1000 acres. Forest Service looked at polygons and 5000 acres. Some additional road facts: 75% of roads are already open to motorized traffic and some in roadless areas; there are 4456 miles of roads and trails - 2,849 miles are open to jeeps and 2,175 are open to ATV and motorcycles.*

*Question – Christine Canaly, SLVEC – How are IRAs not consistent with the Forest Plan? How much is the unreconciled acres?*

*Answer – 93,000 acres have not been properly reconciled with the Forest Plan.*

*Question – Steve Vandiver, Water Conservation District – Do current permits allow maintenance activities/permits?*

*Answer – Don’t know the answer, but it seems that no provision would prohibit primitive (pick and shovel) maintenance work. Butch Rawls provided his experience with this type of maintenance.*

*Question – Dennis Shepherd, OHV user –What was the Wolf Creek Pass situation?*

*Answer – Wolf Creek Pass gets the most snow in Colorado so there are lots of different kinds of recreational users mixing together in one place, including snowmobilers that ride to the top of the pass and snowboard/ski down. People were not always kind or tolerant of other users. Different user groups convened and jointly decided to be more tolerant and created a map to help educate the general public.*

*Question – Christine Canaly, SLVEC & Butch Rawls, Mountain Trails Outfitters – Why is the Forest Plan not providing adequate protection, if only one road has been built since 1996 and DOW said that wildlife is not in jeopardy?*

*Answer – Mr. Rawls answered that the status quo provides adequate protection. Ms. Canaly felt a more thorough analysis needs to be done to ensure that all areas are protected (e.g., high mountain meadows which are currently not protected). This is an opportunity to look at the issue on a larger scale, and can ask the question of balance – how much oil and gas development is needed versus the importance of the ecosystem. It is important not to turn our forest into a strict commodity*

## **OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT**

12 people signed up to speak (all were called, all were present and spoke) on topics including: loss of roadless areas, water in agriculture, logging, protection, declassification of roads, multiple use, motorized recreations, management, sediment, stream crossings, fisheries, insect management, water, land and culture..

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. Rex Shepperd, Creede, Colorado – is a Councilmen for Creede and an angler...has seen continual degradation of fisheries that comes from population growth and access...roadless areas are intrinsically valuable...important to have some areas not covered by people, not overused or over run...streams are degraded due to overuse and roads.
2. Dave Montgomery, Alamosa, Colorado – live in Alamosa and work in Saguache County...work for a company that ships 36 million pounds of lettuce a year...this is a viable economic contributor and requires water...this basin has an artesian aquifer and 90% of the water comes from snowmelt...concerned that recharging aquifer comes from a slow snowmelt and needs to be replenished every year...the valley get 8-10 inches of rain, so without snow pack there would be no agriculture business in the valley...roadless areas slow down the snowmelt system...recommend retaining the status quo; keep the roadless areas...consider the road maintenance backlog...we have enough roads and we need to just maintain what we have.
3. John Rothermich, Colorado Timber Industry, Mosca, Colorado – ATV user, horse rider, and hunter...concerned the epidemic of spruce beetle is huge, and the issue

- goes beyond this forest; exacerbated by the drought and the fire...roadless areas have roads yet the public is not able to use them... the Forest Service doesn't have enough resources to complete necessary management, while some decisions require a significant time delay...there are no problems with roadless areas.
4. Don Thompson – Republicans for Environmental Protection, Alamosa, Colorado – on the board of the Republicans for Environmental Protection...roadless areas are undeveloped for a reason...trying to build a road in remote areas with difficult terrain is expensive and many roadless areas are in remote locations with difficult terrain...Forest Service has a road maintenance backlog already, it makes no sense to build new roads they cannot afford in difficult areas.
  5. Martin D Heimsoth, South Fork, Colorado – a 50 year resident and used the National Forest for 30 years...have seen many OHV roads use in the 1960-70s declassified from a road to a trail and some closed...there are lots of maps that show roads in roadless areas...was involved in the forest plan revision process...saw that the preferred decision sent DC and revised by DC folks to include roadless areas ....important to keep decisions on public lands for multiple use.
  6. Jerry McGeorge, Creeper Jeepers Gang, Durango, Colorado – President of Creepers Jeepers club, a family oriented recreation group, with 200 members including hikers, campers, anglers... one issue of concern is the term “roadless” - it is a misnomer, since members have used many of the roads in IRAs...requests the Task Force make it clear that roadless areas do not necessarily mean no roads...strongly urge the Task Force to return the lands to Forest Service and Forest Management Plans...concerned that the Task Force recreation committee is comprised of mostly those opposed to OHV use...motorized communities are appropriate culturally and environmentally...concerned that the math between miles of roads and number of stream crossings doesn't equate - 2200 miles of roads in Rio Grande and DOW presented there were 9300 stream crossings ...looking to the Task Force to get OHV users off the enemies list.
  7. Dwight Rue, South Fork, Colorado – no one wants new roads...there are too many variables for the Task Force to consider in such a short period of time...concerned about uncertainty, don't know what to expect...DOW has an agenda and doesn't care about local citizen's needs...love the forest and play and work in it every day.
  8. Cathy Morin, Alamosa, Colorado – hiker, hunter, boater; a four season recreationalist...roads offer opportunity for degradation...there is flexibility in the Forest Plan, yet it seems something needs to change...keep the same number of roads (if one is opened, close another)...need to be able to address issues in the future...was part of Wolf Creek Pass Work Group...it is frustrating to go hunting and climb to the top of the valley and see/hear and ATV user zoom across your path...advocate for stronger rules.
  9. Randall Denny, Creeper Jeepers Club, Arboles, Colorado – Vice President for the Creepers Jeepers club...the Forest Supervisor said that 25% of Forest is wilderness with no roads, and 25% is managed for multiple use - that means a lot of the forest is off limits...sediment comes from the rain run-off more than from road erosion...the Club has rebuilt stream crossings and roads...looking to get

- corporate funds to reclaim areas and rebuild areas...the Club's members prefer using "primitive" roads, where a jeep cannot go, and travel to primitive areas...Club members bring trash bags and help keep areas clean.
10. Martin Jones, Trout Unlimited, San Luis Valley Chapter, Alamosa, Colorado – is in agreement with published Colorado Trout Unlimited report.
  11. Eric Reчек, Sierra Club, Grand Junction, Colorado – the term multiple use need to be expanded to include pristine habitat and not just human use and exploitation of the forest...insect management – insects have been part of forests for 1000s of years and we still have forests... "healthy forests" is a subjective perception...insects are perhaps a natural process...don't need "insect management" as an excuse to go into roadless areas
  12. Jose Vieira, Hispano Colorado Voice, Crestone, Colorado – 11<sup>th</sup> generation in the region...first job was with the Forest Service...urge Task force "seek truth, leverage knowledge and implement wisdom" as the emblem above the stage in the auditorium states...the travel management plan has been worked on for six years; the changes profoundly effect what the watershed will be able to supply to future generations...there are many generations in this area that love the land, it is a part of everyone's culture and there is a need to help educate people on the cultural values.



Colorado Roadless Areas Review Task Force  
 Overview of Written Public Comments Received at the  
 Monte Vista Public Comment Meeting

		<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Response Ratio</b>
<b>Number of responses:</b>	4		
<b>Number of CO residents</b>	4		
<b>Number of non-CO residents</b>	0		
<b>Responses by forest</b>	General Comment	1	25%
	Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forests	0	
	Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre-Gunnison National Forests	0	
	Manti-La Sal National Forests	0	
	Pike-San Isabel National Forests	0	
	Rio Grande National Forest	4	100%
	Routt National Forest	0	
	San Juan National Forest	0	
	White River National Forest	0	
<b>Responses by topic of concern</b>	Social and Economic Value	1	25%
	Special Designations	1	25%
	Recreation Management	2	50%
	Natural Resource Management	2	50%
	Other: (see below for specific responses)	0	

**Comment Themes**

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

<b>Comment Themes Indicating a Preferred Action</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Defer to 2001 Rule/Preserve Roadless Areas	4
Retain Non-Motorized Recreation	1

<b>General Comment Themes</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
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*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.*

Colorado Roadless Areas Review Task Force  
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Environmental Emphasis	2
Special Designations	1
Legacy Values	1
Use of Roadless Areas to Promote or Subsidize Industry	2
Other Social and Economic Values	1

**Responses by Topic of Concern: Other, please specify**

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