



**Roadless Areas Review Task Force
Glenwood Springs Public Comment Meeting
Hotel Colorado (Devereux Room)
526 Pine St., Glenwood Springs, Colorado**

**June 21, 2006
5:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.**

5:00 pm Welcome and Introductions

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

5:50 Panel #2: State and Local Government *(6 minutes, 15 minutes Q&A)*

- Eagle County Commissioner – Peter Runyon
- Garfield County Commissioner – John Martin
- Rio Blanco County Commissioner - ?
- Summit County Commissioner – Bob French
- Mayor of Carbondale – Michael Hassig
- US Geological Survey - Vince Mathews

6:50 Panel #3: Stakeholder Groups *(6 minutes per speaker, 15 minutes Q&A)*

- Alan Henceroth, Arapahoe Basin Ski Area & Colorado Ski Country
- Marianne Virgili, Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association (Glenwood Springs)
- Tom Turnbull, Holy Cross Cattlemen’s Assn, Club 20 (Carbondale)
- Currie Craven, Summit County Roadless Coalition (Summit County)
- Pam Roth, EnCana Oil and Gas (Denver)
- Jeff Mead, backcountry outfitter (Grand Junction)
- Sloan Shoemaker, conservation coalition (Roaring Fork Valley)

7:50 Break

8:05 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)

9:00 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 SESSION PRIOR TO THE PUBLIC MEETING

Prior to the Public Meeting the Roadless Areas Review Task Force (Task Force) heard from the Forest Service on two issues: temporary roads and the intersection between the Travel Management Plan process and the Task Force petition process. Forest Service presenters included Sharon Friedman – Regional Director of Planning, Dan Hormaechea – White River National Forest (WRNF), Wendy Haskin – WRNF Forest Planner, in charge of the Travel Management Plan process and Francisco Valenzuela – Regional Planner, Travel Management Plan implementation team.

Temporary Roads – Forest Service

The Forest Service began by answering questions from the Task Force.

Question – How is “reasonable access” defined?

Answer – The Forest Service definition refers to in-holdings, utilities and special use permits and does not include coal, oil & gas leases. “Reasonable” was defined using existing case law - Alaskan National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

Question – Does “reasonable access” relate to more than just roads?

Answer – Correct, it is not just for roads.

Question – Is there a process in place to obtain access for utilities, etc.?

Answer – If a permit application is granted than access is granted as stipulated in the permit. Forest Plans may outline what the future permit needs might be, for example: suitable for leasing but will have no surface occupancy.

Question – What circumstances allow/prohibit road access? What is the basis for the decision?

Answer – The Forest Service looks at why the access is needed, the land type, management prescription, and the degree of potential resource damage.

Question – What other types of access are there besides roads?

Answer – Other access options are on foot, horse and ATV. Allowable access type depends on the conditions necessary in the permit and the environmental alternatives available.

Question – What is the process to get permission for a permittee to be able to conduct improvement activities that require a backhoe (e.g., replacing old irrigation diversion equipment or clean out a pond)?

Answer – The permittee would come to the Forest Service with a proposal. The Forest Service reviews the area for potential environmental damage. If allowed, access would be granted as a categorical exclusion. This process could take two months or more. If the proposed access is a one time in/out event there is apt to be little environmental damage. Not all improvement and maintenance activities would require a temporary road. A temporary road is not a system road and the Forest Service has no commitment to maintain the road.

Question – Are there any assurances that, if the same need arises, the permittee can use the same access point 30 years later?

Answer – Yes, if they are the current permit holder.

Question – Is there a distinction for a utility line to a private cabin and a utility line for major transmission across state? Is this true on all Forest Service lands?

Answer – Utility companies are subject to laws and permit stipulations separate from the public. This is true for all Forest Service lands but more difficult depending on the lands with special designation or specified use.

Question – How does the Forest Service expect to enforce plans and rules with limited enforcement capacities?

Answer – The Travel Management Plan has helped with enforcement by changing the burden of proof to the user. The plan requires Forests to develop maps that designate open trails and their allowable uses. It is the user's responsibility to be familiar with the map and know the appropriate trails and uses. User groups are helping with education of the public regarding the maps and legal uses for certain trails.

Question – What is the flexibility between valid fuels reduction efforts and timber projects that require temporary roads?

Answer – The 2001 rule did not allow building temporary roads for “fuels conditions outside the range of natural conditions”. The legal argument centers on what is “outside natural conditions”.

Question – Can roads be truly temporary? Can roads for energy development be required to be temporary? What effect would an increase in temporary roads have to Forest Service management?

Answer – Roads for timber extraction can be temporary because they are often one time in/out events. Energy production roads do not fit the definition of temporary roads because of the construction needs (based on expected vehicle use) and length of time it is in use. The concern is how long the road will remain in use and how much use it will receive. It could be written into a permit that the proposed road is a single purpose road and must be reclaimed when the purpose has been completed. The 2001 rule said a road can be built for oil and gas leases, but must be reclaimed when

the leases are complete. The concept of “temporary” is important – for timber, a road is generally needed for five years or less; for oil and gas, a road is generally needed for much longer. System roads require more design and are more permanent, which can be better for the resource. A temporary road is more a scrap; get in and out once.

Question – Does the 2001 rule allow exceptions for road building and does the definition of “road” include temporary road building?

Answer – Yes, but for very specific reasons.

Question – What weight does precedent have when renewing a permit? What are the expectations that the same permit stipulations will be renewed? Particularly with regards to “reasonableness”?

Answer – The understanding in the 2001 rule is that if an oil and gas lease is renewed within a year of expiring, the same permit stipulations would be renewed. Normally, the Forest Service would re-examine reasonableness to identify if there is a less environmentally-damaging method.

Travel Management Plan Process

Francisco Valenzuela, Regional Recreation Planner and team leader for implementation of the 2005 Travel Management Rule (TMR), presented some key points regarding the TMR:

- TMR focuses on motorized recreation
- The rule making included a lot of public comment
- The purpose was to forge a sustainable system of roads and trails in the forest – it was important to have a nationally consistent process to look at balance and sustainable uses
- National Forest system has 240 million visitors, 200,000 miles of trails and roads open for OHV use, and at least 14,000 miles of trails that were user-created trails (no formal review process)
- TMR says every unit will designate where motorized roads, trail, system is and create a map that educates the public on what and when routes are open and to what type of user
- TMR puts the responsibility on the user to be informed about what use is allowed on which trail
- Until TMR is implemented, all existing regulations are in place
- There are many kinds of motorized uses
- TMR specifies the Forest Service may allow motorized use around roads expressly/solely for dispersed camping and hunting
- TMR is an enforcement tool
- TMR allows for changes to the map to occur year by year
- The rule stresses collaboration – working with communities and users to establish what roads and trails are open and which are closed; encouraging society stewardship
- Forest Plans and a possible roadless rule are planning, the TMR is designation

- In inventoried roadless areas (IRAs) decisions will need to be made about roads and trails

The regional office developed an implementation strategy, including establishing a team of staff to provide training in the TMR and required forests to develop a method to implement the TMR.

Roadless was not considered in the Travel Management Plan because roadless does not change the management prescriptions. Currently, all Travel Management Plan alternatives are compliant with roadless areas.

Question – In the Forest Plan, roadless areas allowed for ATV and motorcycle usage. Were other activities allowed?

Answer – Most likely other activities were allowed.

Question – Was roadless designation considered in the Forest Plan?

Answer – When management areas were designated in the Forest Plans, roadless was not considered.

Question – To what extent does roadless designation impact Travel Management Plan decisions to open/close a road?

Answer – Roadless inventory would consider it in developing the range of alternatives presented to the public. Then the public would comment on the alternatives.

Question – Does roadless designation have impacts on decisions about trails (less than 50 inches)?

Answer – Yes, it sets the stage for closures, but there is an opportunity for public comment, which may be that the proposed trail is heavily used and liked.

Question – Why wasn't roadless considered in the Forest Plan revision?

Answer – Because the timing of the revision and the timing of the roadless rule. The revision plan was between draft and final when the 2001 rule was made into law. Until the rule, inventories were just inventories and were not attached to management prescriptions.

Question – How hard does overlapping planning efforts make the Forest Service's job?

Answer – It takes time to go through NEPA processes and the layers of regulations add complexity to the analysis.

Question – Does the TMR require a forest inventory of roads and trails?

Answer – Most forest have an inventory of roads and trails. The Task Force could restrict the Forest Service from opening user created trails/roads.

Question – How many enforcement officers are there in Colorado?

Answer – Every Forest Service employee is an enforcement officer, but not sure how many gun-toting officers there are in Colorado, perhaps 30.

Question – What are the consequences for being caught illegally using closed roads?

Answer – The user pays a fine on the spot or could go to federal court. The fine amount is being worked out, but estimated at \$50.

Question – When the roadless inventory was done, were there some roads that did not fit the definition of roads? And how many are there? Is travel of vehicles over 50 inches allowed?

Answer – There are probably some segments of roads in IRAs that may not be managed as open roads. WRNF has good roadless inventory. Generally, automobiles are not allowed in IRAs. There are some single-purpose roads and perhaps some roads were missed in the inventory. Under the TMR and WRNF Plan the burden of proof is on the user. If a user doesn't know they are on a closed road, they could be liable for illegal use.

Question – Does the Forest Service have discretion to renew the TMR inventory? Is there a mechanism to request a new road/trail inventory?

Answer – The TMR says if the Forest Service has an adequate system in place it has discretion to update the inventory. The map is a communication and enforcement tool.

Question – Would there be a NEPA process to decommission a user-created trail?

Answer – There would be no “decommissioning”. It would become illegal to be on the road.

Question – How many acres of wilderness area and wilderness study area are there? How many IRAs?

Answer – 44 percent of the forest (750,000 acres) is IRAs or in Theme 1 area (including Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and non-motorized recreation).

Question – Clarify – approximately half of the 440,000 acres of IRA lands are in management prescription areas that emphasize roadless character.

Answer – Yes, about half of the IRAs in Colorado are in prescription areas that protect roadless characteristics.

PUBLIC MEETING

PANEL #1: FOREST SERVICE

Maribeth Gustafson, Forest Supervisor, presented information on the WRNF and the IRAs. Also present to answer questions: Jan Burke – Forest Timber; Beth Boyst – Wilderness Program Manager; Wendy Haskin – Forest Planner; Dan Hormaechea; Melody Holm – Regional Office of Oil & Gas Program.

General Information on the WRNF

- 2.3 million acres, one of the larger forests
- Ranks number one in the nation for recreation use
- 754,500 acres of Wilderness
- 640,000 acres of IRAs
- People come to WRNF for the renowned
 - o Resort communities
 - o Wilderness areas
 - o Rural communities

Forest Plan

- Developed through an extensive public involvement process
- Public input was sought on WRNF IRA issues from 1996 – 2006
- 82,000 acres were recommended for Wilderness designation – Red Table, Assigantion Ridge, and others

Travel Management Plan

- Began in 2002 and expect to release the draft in the summer
- Normally done in conjunction with revised Forest Plan, this forest decided to do the Travel Plan separately

Inventoried Roadless Areas

- The Forest Service used the roadless criteria as well as areas that protect natural resources - water, plants, animals, threatened and endangered and special species, and cultural properties
- 558,000 acres of IRA lands lie in prescription areas
- 298,000 acres are managed for non-motorized recreation, wild rivers, Wilderness – no road construction with an emphasis on protecting and restoring habitat
- Some portion of IRAs are managed for commodity production and habitat treatments – minimize road construction and work with temporary roads only if it meets the needs of commodity production or habitat treatment
- Another portion is in areas managed for urban interfaces – ski areas and utility corridors (management relies on interim directives and Forest Service handbook)

Other Key Points

- Ski Areas - 8 out of 11 ski areas on the WRNF overlap with IRA boundaries – Aspen, Buttermilk, Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Arapahoe Basin, Copper, and Snowmass.

- Oil and Gas – 27 percent of lands in IRAs are available for leasing; 5 percent are currently leased. Some of the leases have a no surface occupancy stipulation (no structures, no drill rigs, no roads)
- Vegetation Management
 - o A vast majority of grazing permits (cattle and sheep) on WRNF are in IRAs
 - o There are many bark beetle infestations in IRAs and some adjacent to communities (e.g., Vail) - this causes concern about how to deal with the outbreak
 - o 38 percent of the suitable timber production areas identified in the forest plan are in IRAs

Panel #1: Questions and Answers

Question – Clarify – recent oil and gas lease activity. How many acres are affected if the leases are approved? Would no surface occupancy be waived?

Answer – The recent applications stem from the lands the Forest Plan identified as suitable for oil and gas leasing. Current areas offered up for lease include approximately six parcels with IRA designation, about 8,600 acres (6,682 acres would have no surface occupancy stipulations). Rarely, if ever, are no surface occupancy stipulations waived. Will get further policy language to the Task Force.

Question – How firm are the no surface occupancy stipulations? How many acres of suitable oil and gas lands on IRAs have no surface occupancy stipulations?

Answer – The Forest Plan is a contract with the public. The stipulations are firm and it would need to be a very special case to allow an exception. Don't know the exact amount of acres, but it is not a significant amount.

Question – What is the nature and extent of the ski area/IRA overlap and activities? What is the extent of ski area proposed expansions?

Answer – There are no expansions in ski areas because the Forest Plan outlines the lands suitable for ski areas, although there may be improvements. The permit area is different than what is allowable. The overlap with ski areas and IRAs is minor slivers. The overlap stems from changes in technology.

Question – Which areas have allowable expansion room outside current permit areas?

Answer – All permit area boundaries were changed, but that doesn't mean the resort has been actively developed/managed to the edge.

Question – How many acres are there in each of the four theme areas mentioned?

Answer – 44 percent of IRAs are in wilderness character or non-development management themes; 21 percent are in resource and wildlife protection areas; 31 percent are in commodity areas and 4 percent are in urban interface or ski area management area.

Question – How many timber sales and oil and gas projects have there been in IRAs since 2001?

Answer – There have not been extensive projects. There have been vegetation projects and some pending projects that propose to go through IRAs. There has been minimal oil and gas activity. Will provide further information later.

Question – Are there any bark beetle projects in IRAs?

Answer – Not at this time. The Forest Service is conducting a district-by-district assessment to ascertain if there are IRAs that would be appropriate to enter. There is one specific subdivision in Dillon (the Wilderness subdivision) where the Forest Service is looking at fuels reduction, but does not yet have funding to assess the project.

PANEL #2: STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Eagle County Commissioner – Peter Runyon (*submitted hard copy resolution*) – Mr. Runyon spoke about the tremendous growth over the last few decades. One reason people come to this area is the mountains and the ability to enjoy them, particularly skiing. Eagle County economy is \$2 billion and relies on visitors, residents, and second home owners who want to experience the beating heart of nature. It is critical to acknowledge the draw of roadless areas and their contribution to the economy. The Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution supporting the maintenance of wilderness and roadless areas. The one big concern is the bark beetle epidemic. It is important to provide exceptions to be able to mitigate the infestations, especially at urban/wild land interfaces.

Garfield County Commissioner, John Martin (*no submittal*) – Mr. Martin presented that a majority of Garfield County is controlled by federal and state agencies; 1.2 of Garfield's 1.9 million acres. There is a strong willingness to work with federal, state, and local partners. There is no one focus to the residents of Garfield County; they have varied values and viewpoints. It is important to protect all water rights, watersheds, water transportation system and grazing permits; they are all interconnected.

There is a need on public lands for places to enjoy the peace and quiet of the great outdoors; places to be one with nature. We must protect these areas. But the public lands are multiple-use lands, where extraction of natural resources will be requested or required. The County wants to be a part of the review of projects.

Mr. Martin asked the Task Force to keep in mind that there are proper processes for decision-making regarding access and that access to public lands is a vested property right of the public. Each access within public lands has a story and history that must be listened to and understood before changes are made. All access should remain the same until the process is complete.

If everyone works together, we will find compromise and our public lands will be protected and remain open to all. No one agency can create a blanket policy on all public lands.

Summit County Commissioner, Ron Holliday (*submitted hard copy report at deliberative meeting in Monte Vista and testimony*) – Summit County is defined by wild lands. They help define the culture, history, and identity of the County. Protecting and wisely managing these lands is important for sustaining a recreation-oriented economy.

The County is 82 percent managed by Forest Service; 39 percent of the County is Wilderness (24 percent) or roadless (15 percent). The County has 19 roadless areas (58,950 acres).

The County wanted to gather details and information from the public to inform the development of their recommendations to the Task Force. The County attended task force meetings around the state, initiated a public process through the County's planning department, incorporated County GIS data, formed a workgroup to gather local expertise on history, conditions and characteristics of IRAs and held public meetings.

The County adopted a formal resolution on May 23, 2006. There were several guiding principles that were used as a filter for every recommendation which embody the need for sound, long term, common sense environmental stewardship practices. The principles include:

- Respect existing rights/maintain private and public infrastructure
- Recognize the need for ongoing vegetative/forest management – the expectation is 150,000 acres of dead lodge pole in the County
- Recognize the need for buffering of urban/wild land interface areas
- Support reasonable Forest Service land trades that are in the public interest
- Correct Forest Service edge mapping/mapping errors

Summit County recommendations include:

- Add 3,718 acres to roadless designation to:
 - o Incorporate former in-holdings (Mahan Lake area) and former State Land Board parcel and newly acquired national Forest System lands
 - o Adjust the Ptarmigan B Roadless area to follow “Recommended Wilderness” management prescription
 - o Expand the Tenmile and Tenderfoot roadless areas
- Remove Ryan Gulch from roadless designation (632 acres) – this area surrounds a densely populated area (2,500 units) and removing the IRA designation would reduce the risk of loss or damage
- Consider two areas for Wilderness designation – Ptarmigan B and C roadless areas

Summit County conducted a thorough public process to develop detailed recommendations; Mr. Holliday urged the Task Force to resist the temptation to be broad.

Mayor of Carbondale, Michael Hassig (*no submittal*) – Mr. Hassig is part of a group of officials from various jurisdictions, counties from Rifle to Aspen, to discuss regional concerns. All of the jurisdictions on the group have passed roadless area resolutions.

Citizens treasure the roadless areas and the future rests on the preservation of these lands, not degradation for the short-term gain.

Mr. Hassig urged the Task Force to protect roadless areas, prohibit roads for new commercial development (logging, mineral extraction, etc.) while protecting existing permits.

Colorado Geological Survey, Vince Mathews (*no submittal*) – Mr. Mathews reviewed a series of maps showing existing oil and gas fields, mine permits and known mineral deposits, also maps showing potential for oil and gas, mineral deposits, and coal reserves. He provided global context for the need for Colorado’s natural resources; the pressure to develop the resources – the growth rates of China, India and the United States, the significant increase in prices for minerals and energy resources in the last five years.

Mr. Mathews described Colorado’s resource picture. Colorado, between Glenwood Springs and Parachute, has four of the top 35 oil and gas deposits. Garfield County is the most active for permits in the state. Colorado has the world largest titanium deposit. Colorado’s wealth of natural resource is bringing global pressure for Colorado to develop their resources to meet the global demands.

Panel #2: Questions and Answers

Question – Mayor Hassig – Clarify - no new roads for mineral/logging?

Answer – Since there is scientific disagreement about treatment options, there should be no activities even for fuels of insects.

Question – Summit County – Why remove the Ryan Gulch area from roadless designation?

Answer – This area wraps around a dense development. The concern is that a national decision-maker will tie the hands of local forest managers to deal with this area that is so close to a large population.

Question – Summit County – Would it meet the interest of the removal recommendation, to meet the concern of endangering the development, by allowing treatment in the interface, instead of removing the area?

Answer – It would be helpful. Another concern is that the development has only one exit road. Summit County wants to unshackle impediment for management of those 600+ acres.

Question – Summit County – Clarify your recommendation to add areas.

Answer – The additions include areas contiguous to IRAs, some islands, and some in-holdings that have since been turned back to the Forest Service.

Question – Summit County – Did the County talk with the Forest Service about amending the Forest Plan for the Ryan Gulch area?

Answer – Still considering the best course of action; not decided if it makes sense to open up the plan for just one piece.

Question – Summit County – How do big game movement corridors interact with the Ryan Gulch area?

Answer – The major big game corridor is between Frisco and Breckenridge. The wildlife experts in the County agree with all the recommendations, although there is a concern about the headquarters that is in the Ryan Gulch area.

Question – Summit County – What would it take for folks to feel comfortable?

Answer – An edict from Congress that reasonable forest practices could occur in IRAs. Second to that would be something from the Secretary of Agriculture saying what can and cannot occur in IRAs.

Question – Summit County – Clarify - mapping errors concerning ski resorts.

Answer – Technology has changed dramatically from RARE I & II days. Recent analysis has shown that the lines don't match up on the ground. The recommended change would also fix the overlap of ski area permits with IRAs.

Question – Eagle County – Does Eagle County support Summit County's recommendations? When could Forest Service enter for insect, disease, fire?

Answer – Yes, Eagle County supports Summit County's recommendations. It is important to identify the appropriate areas for fuels removal because it is undesirable and unpractical to clear all fuels. Mother Nature renews herself and it seems the desire to go into these areas is more about protecting economic interests – dwellings and tourist spots.

PANEL #3: STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Alan Henceroth, Arapahoe Basin Ski Area & Colorado Ski Country (*submitted hardcopy testimony*) – Mr. Henceroth is General Manager and Chief Operating Office of Arapahoe Basin Ski Area located in Summit County. He was speaking on behalf of Colorado Ski Country USA (CSCUSA), a trade association representing 25 ski resorts in Colorado, 23 of which operate on Forest Service lands under special use permits.

Roadless areas provide economic value to Colorado and the resort communities in Colorado for all different types of recreation as well as ski areas. Eleven CSCUSA member resorts include portions of IRAs – Arapahoe Basin, Breckenridge, Copper Mountain, Snowmass, Buttermilk, Aspen Mountain, Vail, Beaver Creek, Loveland, Steamboat and Crested Butte. There are 8,012 acres of roadless areas inside the permit boundaries of those eleven ski areas, or 2 tenths of 1 percent of the 4,433,000 acres of Colorado's roadless area.

CSCUSA's adopted position is to urge the Task Force and the Governor to recommend removal from roadless inventory areas that are allocated in Forest Plans to ski area special uses. The State of Colorado should request that the Forest Service adjust

inventoried roadless area boundaries in Colorado to remove limited roadless area acreage from the roadless inventory. It is confusing and contradictory and serves no purpose other than controversy to keep lands within a ski area boundary or ski management area in roadless inventory. A ski area and roadless area have fundamentally different characteristics/different management theme areas. Ski areas are intensively managed recreation with facilities that may be intensively used. A broad spectrum of roadless characteristics is not likely to be found at a ski area used by hundreds of thousands or even a million or more visitors a year.

The Forest Service conducted a three-year public process and prepared an environmental impact statement to revise the Forest Plan. At the end, the Forest Service allocated certain lands in roadless inventory to develop skiing. Every acre of a roadless area within a ski area or allocated in a Forest Plan to skiing, the Forest Service has made a public decision that the land is best devoted to developed skiing and is managed for skiing. Also, ski areas must undergo extensive NEPA analysis for impacts to wildlife and other resources. Ski areas are stewards of public lands and accordingly conduct extensive resource protecting and enhancing activities on their permit areas. A roadless overlay is not needed to provide the agency with the authority to protect and manage the resources at a ski area.

CSCUSA urges the Task Force and Governor to recommend that the Forest Service remove from the roadless inventory areas allocated to skiing in existing Forest Plans, and allocated to skiing in Forest Plans that are currently under revision.

Marianne Virgili, Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association (*no submittal*) – Ms. Virgili is president and CEO of the Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association. The Chamber has 650 members in the tourism business. Protecting the environment is sound business practice. The natural resources are the reason tourists come to recreate and live. With the advent of the internet-based business, we can attract small businesses to the area because of Colorado's quality of life.

Currie Craven, Summit County Roadless Coalition (*submitted hard copy testimony*) – Mr. Craven and the Summit County Roadless Coalition work to maintain trails and Wilderness areas. The Summit County process to develop recommendations included lots of public meetings and there was consensus support for the roadless areas. The process went area-by-area to address mapping concerns.

There is a need for a buffer at the urban/wild land interfaces, particularly as communities grow. Maintenance of IRAs for roadless characteristics will create a buffer for wilderness and preserve natural processes. Communities have been working hard to lessen the fire risks, but their efforts would be helped by efforts on the IRA side.

Mr. Currie supports the coalition of outfitters and Summit County in supporting roadless areas. He is also interested in boundary adjustments in the Porcupine area to address concerns regarding ski areas.

The I-70 corridor has brought economic benefits to the area along with problems. There are only four wildlife crossings over I-70. IRAs are important for the continued protection of these crossings.

Jeff Mead, Backcountry Outfitter (*no submittal*) – Mr. Mead urged the Task Force to protect all roadless areas and keep out all roads. His personal experience with a new 1.6-mile, 30-foot wide road that is located next to a creek in prime deer and elk habitat has been a dramatic drop in elk population.

The elk hunting industry draws 136,000 people to the area (residents and non-residents). Over the last few years there has been a decrease in hunting clients. The clients don't want to hunt next to a drill rig, platform or cross 30-foot wide roads. This is a loss of revenue for Mr. Mead and for the local economy.

There are 200 registered outfitters in Colorado. They and small towns rely on hunting and the summer pack industry for their livelihoods.

Mr. Mead stressed the importance of leaving roadless areas roadless – it is what draws visitors, it is what draws residents, it is what keeps people here.

Sloan Shoemaker, Wilderness Workshop (*submitted a DVD that talks to fire issues*) – Mr. Shoemaker spoke in favor of protecting roadless areas. The WRNF is the most visited forest and local economies are thriving as a result. The WRNF is magnificent, accessible and wild. Some of the extraordinary values include big game habitat, the world's largest elk herd, the best bear habitat in the state, lynx population, big horn sheep herds, Colorado River cutthroat trout and key wildlife linkages along the spine of the Rockies, including the only land bridge over I-70 (at Eisenhower Tunnel). Other values include: portions of the largest continuous expanse of aspen forest in the world, largest stand of old-growth spruce/fir on the forest, 8,000 year-old peat bog ecosystem and more.

Access to all of the values of the WRNF is readily provided by the 2,356 miles of forest roads and 1,895 miles of forest trails (cited in the forest plan).

Public comment supports protection of roadless areas.

Using the same protocols as the San Juan Citizens Alliance, the Wilderness Workshop found 1.1 million acres of roadless area, in contrast to the WRNF official 640,000 acres.

The western end of the WRNF contains roadless areas that overlie the natural gas deposits of the Piceance Basin. These roadless areas have multiple and superlative values that are more enduring than the finite natural gas resource they overlie. It seems unwise to eliminate these long term, sustainable values in pursuit of a short term supply of a finite resource. It makes more sense to wait for the technology to mature to where the resource can be harvested without harming the natural values.

The Forest Service needs to provide interim protection for roadless areas until this process concludes in a final Colorado roadless rulemaking.

Citizens are rightly concerned about the health, safety, and welfare of their communities. It is important to address fuel issues long before flames reach the edge of town. Mr. Shoemaker is comfortable with an interpretation of ‘imminent threat’ that extends its understanding from ‘imminent in time’ to ‘imminent in space’ – the proximity of fuels to structures at risk could be considered spatially imminent threat and would qualify for treatments under the imminent threat language.

Tom Turnbull, Holy Cross Cattlemen’s Association, Club 20 (*no submittal*) – Steve Smith passed on 3 points from Mr. Turnbull who was unable to make it at the last minute:

1. Quiet areas of the forest should be kept that way
2. Concerns regarding motorized use and grazing (need unharrassed livestock)
3. Existing or new policies to maintain existing permits and access to do improvements

Panel #3: Question and Answers

Question – Summit County Roadless Coalition – Do you support the removal of Ryan’s Gulch area?

Answer – Ryan Gulch is at the tip of the spear of urban areas. Most of the comments during the Summit County process on the issue were opposed to removing the area. Mr. Currie does endorse necessary buffering and extending the area down along the Salt Lick Creek (an important elk calving area with a wonderful network of trails). The Summit County Roadless Coalition endorses maintaining the IRAs.

Question – Jeff Mead - How important is IRAs for big game?

Answer – IRAs are very important, particularly for wintering habitat. Habitat fragmentation is a major problem and IRAs can help maintain large contiguous tracks of land. IRAs help maintain the outfitters way of life that has been around for three to four generations.

Question – Arapahoe Basin & CSCUSA – Why remove the overlapping IRA/ski permit areas?

Answer – The WRNF ski areas will not be expanded, but outside the WRNF, other forests are not in the same place on the forest plan revisions. These overlaps create more than a management conflict. Ski area management is not consistent with IRA characteristics.

Question – Arapahoe Basin & CSCUSA – How have ski permit areas overlapped with IRAs? Why?

Answer – Do not now why. Arapahoe basin has 490 acres, 15 percent is located in Porcupine IRA.

Question – Arapahoe Basin & CSCUSA – What are the problems with IRAs and ski area if the roadless rule does not prohibit snow vehicles?

Answer – IRAs and ski areas have two vastly different uses, goals and purposes.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

58 people signed up to speak (35 were called, 27 spoke) on topics including: preservation, fire danger, tourist values, conservation, real estate, younger generations, gas leases, OHV impacts, water quality, economic impacts, wildlife, recreation (motorized, hunting, fishing, bicycling, hiking, snowmobiling), multiple use, watershed protection, support of/protection of current roadless areas, boundary adjustment, and invasive species.

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. Bradley Yule, Aspen, Colorado - keep roadless areas roadless...keep long term viability...consider how wildlife moves...and livestock management...protect these lands to keep Colorado healthy and our economies healthy.
2. Rachel Richards, Carbondale, Colorado – a 13 year member of Aspen City Council...3 areas of concern: 1. fire hazard, managing forest health and the interface with urban areas...any road for any reason would be an access point for fire...the area is being dewatered... it is important to avoid a tinder box...2. Conservation - resources in our backcountry needs to be safe guarded for future generations...3. Tourism – most popular brochure is the trail map (more popular than the free margarita coupon)...tourism is a natural resource.
3. Ed Foran, Aspen Board of Realtors, Aspen, Colorado – Realtors for wilderness was formed to support efforts and urge the Task Force to reinstate all roadless areas, particularly in the Roaring Fork drainage...why don't realtors want more roads? The local economy is based on tourism, clean air water and intact health systems ...this is good for the health of real estate...quality of life benefits may not be quantifiable, may not be able to put a number on the value of roadless areas...property owners in Roaring Fork value the benefit from recreation and clean watersheds ...asking the Task Force to recommend to the Governor to fully protect all roadless areas and include the full 1.1 million acres inventoried by citizen groups.
4. Arron Ralston, Maroon Corps, Aspen, Colorado – Maroon Corps is for folks living in roaring fork valley working on trails...have personally been in 30 IRAs in WRNF...management decisions need to be based on sound science...when removing conflict with ski areas and IRAs - those decisions need to be based on specific reasons and not whole scale removal...consider wild fire management practices....we need to protect fuels around homes, but leave backcountry areas...economic sustainability that have been built on roadless area values...protect the IRAs in the interim.

5. Jim Ward, Wilderness Workshop, Aspen, Colorado – member of the active seniors community in Aspen that does lots of outdoor activities summer and winter, and uses roadless and wilderness areas and has worked with mountaineering schools...concerned about maintaining these area for future generations...cannot give a little now and little later, these areas must be save for future generations.
6. Charles Hopton, Aspen, Colorado – part of the Wilderness Workshop...2 points –
 1. Wilderness Workshop with Richard Compton did the GIS work for the 1.4 million of roadless...Wilderness Workshop has been monitoring and inventorying...consider more than the 640,000 acres...concerned about the oil and gas leases being considered, these undermine the work of the Task Force.
7. Sylvia Wendrow, Carbondale, Colorado – What has happened to the Wild West? Drive the roaring fork valley and there is urbanization everywhere...think about future generations, what are we leaving any wild west.
8. Jack Hatfield, Pitkin County, Snowmass Village, Colorado – roadless areas is an important issue...resolution passed unanimously...the Nation’s most visited forest, and contributes significantly to Pitkin county...provides vital watershed and water flows, protect riparian areas and water for homes...preservation will protect the heart of the surrounding forest while still allowing uses...urge Task Force to recommend protecting all WRNF IRAs, all current areas as inventoried in 2001 EIS and additional 436,000 inventoried by local citizens...recommend management of IRAs should prohibit construction for any commercial development, while respecting existing permits.
9. Dennis Larratt, Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition, Littleton, Colorado – recommend Task Force allow Forest Service to manage the IRAs under forest plan and Travel management plan (give it back, remove the designation)...think about protecting the beetle infestation around high value real-estate...we may need to keep the resources in the ground for future generations.
10. ? – the value of roadless areas are for all...opening roads is a precursor to development...5 years ago 90 percent of the public supported roadless areas...not democracy to lease lands before a rule has been established – not right...arbitrarily disregard the public comment...urge Task Force to put the desires of the public before the governor
11. Rick Lofaro, Roaring Fork Conservancy, Basalt, Colorado – executive director of the Roaring Folk Conservancy – dedicated to protecting and enhancing the waters in the roaring fork valley ...the watershed provides almost 1 million acres feet to the Colorado river...introduction of roads impacts water and riparian areas...concerned introduction of roads will pollute water, and increase invasive species...roadless areas should be protected.
12. Anne Esson, Eagle River Watershed Council, Vail, Colorado – an avid hiker, climber, member of the watershed council in her area...watershed issues...black bar creek (impaired stream – because of road sands) runs from Vail pass into East Vail and then into Gore creek – has recently been shown to have problems (good bugs in the water are decreasing while amounts are increasing)...the best way to help rejuvenate streams, is to keep areas roadless...one documented pollution

- cause for Gore creek is ski resorts...help restore the health of the contributors watershed health.
13. Bob Cornez, El Jebel, Colorado – urge the Task Force to protect roadless areas and add additional areas suggested...roadless areas will protect existing uses and access...there are exceptions in roadless rule allows for protection of urban interface.
 14. Ken Neubecker, Colorado Trout Unlimited, Carbondale, Colorado – spent five years on Eagle County Planning Commission ...concerned about water quality – IRAs are a significant resource for clean water...the plan revision took out water protections...only way to protect watershed is to keep roads out...Economy in the area is boom/bust energy cycle...hunting and fishing and recreation are a more sustainable economy...quoted from a report that discusses the value of hunting and angling benefits on rural economies - having public lands adjacent to a county is good for the economy; the more protection of the land the more the economy grows...protected public lands are important to the sustainable county economies...Forest Service should wait to lease lands until after this process.
 15. Anna Triebel, Glenwood Springs, Colorado – In high school...grew up in Glenwood Springs hiking and getting out into wilderness...leaving roads and houses is an important aspect of living in Colorado...need to protect these areas for future generations and for wild life to have enough area to live...preserve IRAs for the enjoyment of humans and animals.
 16. Ken Ransford, Carbondale, Colorado – 95 percent of the public comments are in favor of roadless protection...is the Glenwood Springs comments the same or different than at other meetings?...what part of “NO” doesn’t this current administration understand...we have a problem with obesity today and don’t know how opening up more trails for motorized use will help with that problems...it is clear that many people want to protect roadless area.
 17. Renee Fleisher, Blazing Adventurers, Basalt, Colorado – putting roads in roadless areas and Wilderness areas is raping and pillaging...tourists come to see the beauty of the land and not the minerals...they come from busy cities and want to play in the natural environment.
 18. Joe Casselberry, Dillon, Colorado– question leasing before this process is complete...Summit County does not always listen to all its citizens...snowmobiling in Summit County overlaps with IRAs...ask that snowmobiles continue to be allowed access and allow access to the IRAs across from Keystone...roadless areas need to be managed for multiple use.
 19. Gerry Vanderbeek, Glenwood Springs, Colorado – realized there are too many roads already in the National Forest...hiked in the seven hermit region and you stumble from one track/road to another...Forest Service cannot afford to maintain the roads they have...look at other Countries - in India they have vast tracks that honor their roadless areas and don’t building new ones, in a country of 1 billion people...there are higher values in life than economics and employment...in 2000 many people gave public comments into a rule that was turned into law, 95 percent of those comments were in support of roadless areas.
 20. Robert Comy, Carbondale, Colorado – his backyard is west of highway 133...friends and family visit these areas; they are important jewels, and it is

- important that it stays that way...weeds and invasive species (including birds), are a bigger problem than roads...the bigger the vehicle the bigger the problem for dispersing weeds...even if the road is temporary the weeds are tracked in; roads are not temporary... watch out for weeds even when going in for insect management.
21. Phil Linderman, Hi Point Motorsports, Glenwood Springs, Colorado – is an ATV, power sport business owner...the number one product is utility ATV which get used to move from place to place, not to damage the backcountry...people rely on the products to get back to cabins...it is important for those with limited to have access to backcountry areas, don't always have time for a three-day pack trip...everyone needs to be able to see the beauty of nature.
 22. Dale Reed, Glenwood Springs, Colorado – concerned with impacts of roads on wildlife...more roads means more impacts and less enforcement...there is limited enforcement officers available and it is hard to enforce the roads currently...be conservative with regards to roads.
 23. Dave ? – an outfitter...seems that everything is for sale...greed kills
 24. Elliot ? – Ute mountaineer outdoor retail...ask for protection of IRAs and no road building...outdoor industry relies heavily on the roadless areas, from tourists within Colorado and around the world...Colorado tourism bring millions of dollars to state and local economies a year...protect all IRAs they are the life blood of outdoor industry.
 25. Shane Porter, New castle, Colorado – the roadless rule is blanket legislation that takes power from local decision makers and gives it to a bureaucrat...a roadless rule takes power from local authorities and gives it to authorities further from the actual issues...we are not doomed if a road is built...the natural processes take over and removes a road (personally experienced this).
 26. Clare Bastable, Colorado Mountain Club, Carbondale, Colorado – The Colorado Mountain club has 10,000 members...the travel management plan process is in the middle and the hope is to have a draft plan released in the next couple of month...there are 2,500 miles of roads in the WRNF...there are few areas where a person can get more than 2 miles from a road...there is a backlog of road maintenance, so it doesn't make economic sense to allow for more routes to be built...consider all the comments and letters and bring that forward and represent what was asked for.
 27. Nina Schnipper, Basalt, Colorado – there is a huge fiscal backlog for maintaining roads which seems to make the point about possible new roads moot – who will maintain any new roads...personal experienced a fire that would have taken her home if there had been thinning in the areas...multiple use – there is a difference between roads and trails for motorized use...roadless areas are just saying no “new” roads...consider the safety of children and users – safer without big roads crossing OHV trails.

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

		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Number of responses:	713		
Number of CO residents	687		
Number of non-CO residents	26		
Responses by forest	General Comment	661	93%
	Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forests	4	0.56%
	Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre-Gunnison National Forests	4	0.56%
	Manti-La Sal National Forests	2	0.28%
	Pike-San Isabel National Forests	3	0.42%
	Rio Grande National Forest	2	0.28%
	Routt National Forest	11	1.5%
	San Juan National Forest	8	1.1%
	White River National Forest	95	13%
	Responses by topic of concern	Social and Economic Value	41
Special Designations		19	
Recreation Management		38	
Natural Resource Management		41	
Other: (see below for specific responses)		13	

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.

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	675
Defer to Forest Management Plan	10
Retain Motorized Recreation	11
Retain Non-Motorized Recreation	6

General Comment Themes	Number of Responses
General	8
Public Involvement/Collaboration and Decision-Making Process	31
Environmental Emphasis	442
Multiple Use Management Emphasis	4
Special Designations	3
Job Creation/Economic Stability of Rural Communities, States, and the Nation	85
Legacy Values	104
Quality of Life	322
Use of Roadless Areas to Promote or Subsidize Industry	110
Reallocating Costs of Roadless Area Development to Meet Other Needs	4
Global Economy	
Homeland Security	
Other Social and Economic Values	37

Responses by Topic of Concern: Other, please specify

1. Animal and plant habitats; unspoiled beauty
2. Educational value
3. Environmental
4. Environmental impact!
5. Future resource banking; cultural areas
6. Habitat preservation; water quality
7. Keep it wild and roadless
8. Keep N.F. Open
9. Natural resource protection
10. Remain roadless!
11. To keep undeveloped areas roadless; no natural gas dev. in roadless areas
12. Travel management
13. Wildlife habitat, water resource preservation

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