APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION

INTRODUCTION

The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG) initiated the Forest Plan Revision in 2001. The first Forest Plan was developed in 1983 and was significantly amended in 1991 and 1993.

Since 1983, much has changed on the Forest, including the people and communities who look to the Forest for livelihood, recreation, and inspiration. Natural resources such as forests, rangeland, water, and wildlife have changed due to natural and human causes. More significant are the changes in the human communities in and around the GMUG. Western Colorado in general has experienced rapid population growth in the 1980s and 1990s. Along with population growth, are shifting patterns of land and resource use, different forms of economic activity, and new values and objectives for public lands. The region as a whole will continue to grow and diversify. This makes planning and managing the GMUG for the future a challenge for the agency and those interested in its stewardship.

Public involvement is key in the development of a forest plan that represents public values and provides effective, strategic direction to maintain or achieve desired conditions. In this effort, the planning team implemented a proactive, public participation strategy that engaged a wide-variety of stakeholders (local governments, forest users, community representatives, American Indian tribes, etc.) interested in the stewardship of the GMUG. The goal was to engage numerous stakeholders and sustain their collaborative participation throughout the planning process.

The comprehensive public involvement effort provided a number of opportunities for stakeholders to participate, based on their time and interest. The GMUG planning team worked closely with District Rangers and their staff to encourage public participation and to ensure many possible points of contact for the public.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION ON THE GMUG PLAN REVISION

Identifying stakeholder goals, objectives, issues, and desired conditions for the GMUG Plan Revision. *October 2001- December 2004*

Public involvement opportunities were designed to gather information on desired conditions and uses of the Forest and its resources. Focus groups and one-on-one interviews with interests groups, government officials, Forest Service employees, and concerned citizens were conducted.

Individuals and groups were interviewed in various communities throughout the GMUG to identify the major planning issues or topics of importance and the perceived role of the Forest Service in addressing those issues. Issues of concern were summarized by geographic area and included multiple use paradigm (support of multiple use but concerns about implementation), roads, trails, ATV use, access, timber harvesting, grazing, habitat, ecosystem integrity, communication, agency coordination,

enforcement, education, land exchanges, water quality/quantity, mining claims, PILT payments, and fee demo project.

From interviews with multiple stakeholder groups, an over-all set of objectives (25 statements) were developed. These statements provided a foundation for determining what was important to the various groups of GMUG stakeholders (Summary of Stakeholder Objectives).

Geographic Areas: The GMUG consists of three national forests comprised of approximately three million acres within eight counties. Because the GMUG is a large and diverse forest, it was organized into five geographic areas for planning purposes. The geographic areas (GAs) were drawn to encompass homogeneous areas based on geological, ecological, social, and economic attributes. They featured delineations based upon watersheds, plateaus, mountain ranges, and mesas that had their own unique social networks and communities. Geographic areas were also drawn to recognize interconnections based upon major travel corridors, such as popular recreation access points or destinations, domestic watersheds, scenery, commercial enterprises like ski resorts, and other ecological, social, and economic functions. It was critical that communities would identify with these areas to generate interest and participation in the plan revision process. Each geographic area (Grand Mesa, Gunnison Basin, North Fork Valley, San Juans, Uncompahgre Plateau) was eventually subdivided into landscapes (about 20 for each GA) to further facilitate place-based discussions.

Collaborative Learning: Internal and External Capacity Building. *September 2001-January 2002*

Public involvement in the Forest Plan Revision was initiated with a community conference in October 2001. Subsequently, two community "training" conferences, "*Putting Collaborative Learning to Work in Forest Plan Revision,"* were held in December 2001 and January 2002. Stakeholder representatives included County and City Government, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado State University Extension, the timber industry, Colorado Division of Wildlife, hiking clubs, High Country Citizens Alliance, and Western Colorado Congress. (Landscape Working Group Handbook).

The Forest Service sponsored several workshops on collaborative learning for regional planners and others interested in the stewardship of the GMUG. A variety of techniques to promote stakeholder participation were presented and ideas discussed on the best approach to encourage community involvement in the GMUG Forest Plan Revision. The goal was for citizens and Forest Service staff to work together to identify critical issues and develop a range of landscape-specific desired conditions for geographic areas. Through small group work sessions, individuals exchanged ideas and learned about a range of possible management opportunities.

Landscape Working Groups. *February 2002 – November 2003*

As individuals and groups with various perspectives and interests in the GMUG attended community meetings, Landscape Working Groups were formed. These groups were organized by geographic area (GA) with multiple meetings held in various communities within each GA. Within the LWGs, relationship-building and information-

sharing occurred within an open environment that promoted involvement and contributions from all participants.

Participants received information about current conditions on the Forest, and in turn, provided input to the Forest Service about their vision for the Forest, desired conditions, suitable uses, and recommendations for change. The participants developed a draft vision statement for Forest lands within each GA and described the significance and role of the Forest to their communities and on a regional and national level. Participants also identified key issues, challenges, and risks involved in attaining the vision and future desired conditions. No Plan decisions were made in the Landscape Working Groups; however, recommendations were developed that were carried forward to subsequent planning discussions and into proposed plan changes.

The discussions and exchange of ideas that occurred within the LWGs, improved agency and stakeholders understanding of current conditions and management issues. The format and agendas for the LWG meetings varied and included large and small group activities and discussions, technical presentations, and field trips. Meeting agendas, attendee lists, and meeting notes are on file and on the GMUG Planning website. All LWG meetings were facilitated by a third-party neutral facilitator under contract to the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution.

From February 2002 through October 2003, 42 LWG meetings were attended by approximately 1,035 individuals participating in one or more meetings. Specific information about the objectives and activities of each meeting are provided in the GMUG Landscape Working Group meeting summary. A draft vision statement, distinctive roles and contributions of the Forest, challenges in realizing the vision, and landscape unit desired conditions have been summarized for each Geographic Area (Grand Mesa, Gunnison Basin, North Fork Valley, San Juans, Uncompahgre Plateau).

Table 1. Forest Plan Revision meetings for the **Grand Mesa GA.**

Location	Date	Topic presented or discussed
Cedaredge	April 1, 2003	Kick-off meetings: Develop an understanding of the LWG and GMUG Forest Plan Revision; Identify and prioritize a range of issues concerns about current and future conditions; and identify where these occur on maps.
Mesa	April 3, 2003	
Grand Junction	April 8, 2003	
Mesa	April 17, 2003	Presentation of “Management Themes”, identify and discuss current conditions and future desired conditions (management themes) in selected landscapes.
Cedaredge	April 24, 2003	
Grand Junction	April 29, 2003	

Table 2. Forest Plan Revision meetings for the **Gunnison Basin GA.**

Location	Date	Topic presented or discussed
Lake City	July 16, 2003	Kick-off meetings: Develop an understanding of the GMUG Forest Plan Revision, LWGs role, land suitability and Geographic Assessments; Discuss distinctive roles of the GMUG; Develop a visions statement for the GA; Discuss management concerns and challenges; Identify and prioritize a range of issues and concerns about current and future conditions; Identify where these occur on maps.
Gunnison	September 10, 2003	
Lake City	July 30, 2003	Identify and discuss current conditions and desired future management themes on selected landscapes.
Gothic	August 11, 2003	
Gunnison	September 24, 2003	
Crested Butte	October 9, 2003	

Table 3. Forest Plan Revision meetings for the **North Fork Valley GA.**

Location	Date	Topic presented or discussed
Paonia	August 15, 2002	Kick-off meetings: Develop an understanding of the LWG and GMUG Forest Plan Revision; Identify and prioritize a range of issues and concerns for this GA.
Hotchkiss	September 19, 2002	Provide technical information on current water use in the NFV; Participants discuss water resources, their values, desired conditions.
Hotchkiss	October 17, 2002	Discuss how the forest plan guides coal, oil and gas leasing and development on NF lands. Refine issues and explain/discuss land suitability relating to coal, oil and gas.
Hotchkiss	November 12, 2002	Discuss linkages between Delta Co. Master Plan and GMUG Forest Plan Revision; Discuss current Plan land suitability, and potential changes towards desired conditions.
Paonia	February 20, 2003	Overview of landscape management themes; Discuss current theme management and future desired conditions (themes) by landscape.
Paonia	March 4, 2003	Continue discussion of current conditions, future desired conditions and management recommendations by landscape.
Crawford	March 11 , 2003	

Table 4. Forest Plan Revision meetings for the **San Juans GA.**

Location	Date	Topic presented or discussed
Ridgway	July 10, 2003	Kick-off meetings: Develop an understanding of the GMUG Forest Plan Revision, LWGs role, land suitability and Geographic Assessments; Discuss distinctive roles of the GMUG; Develop a visions statement for the GA; Discuss management concerns and challenges; Identify and prioritize a range of issues and concerns about current and future conditions; Identify where these occur on maps.
Telluride	July 24, 2003	
Montrose	July 22, 2003	Identify and discuss current conditions and desired future management themes on selected landscapes.
Norwood	August 5, 2003	
Telluride	August 27, 2003	

Table 5. Forest Plan Revision meetings for the **Uncompahgre Plateau GA.**

Location	Date	Topic presented or discussed
Montrose	January 28, 2002	Kick-off meetings: Introduction, relationship building, learning about collaboration, shared history timeline.
Grand Junction	March 5, 2002	
Norwood	March 7,2002	
Montrose	March 19, 2002	Develop a range of issues and concerns about current and future conditions of the landscapes.
Grand Junction	March 25, 2002	
Redvale	April 4, 2002	
Norwood	April 23, 2002	Review and discuss issues and map areas with high priority issues.
Delta	April 25, 2002	
Redvale	May 21, 2002	Review issue summaries and maps, and develop landscape desired conditions.
Delta	May 22, 2002	
Field Trip-Norwood	June 29, 2003	Burn Canyon: Bucktail Wildfire effects
Norwood	June 18, 2002	Presentation “Vegetation patterns and dynamics: understanding the basics to assist in setting future conditions”.
Delta	June 20, 2002	
Delta	July 30, 2002	A panel of specialists addressed ecosystem management and restoration tools (prescribed fire, grazing and logging) and their roles in shaping current conditions.
Norwood	August 1, 2002	
Delta	August 20,2002	Roads and trails management and their relationship to achieving desired conditions.
Norwood	August 22. 2002	
Montrose	October 10, 2002	Review where this LWG is in the planning process; Discuss, suitability determinations, current and desired conditions, potential tools, management challenges and next steps in the planning process.

STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS

The GMUG Forest Officials convened work sessions with representatives from various stakeholder groups to generate ideas for continued public involvement, particularly how best to approach the public "roll-out" of the key findings from the comprehensive evaluations of ecological, social, and economic conditions, and the proposed Plan.

The stakeholders provided suggestions to the planning team for engaging the public through the review of the preliminary proposed actions for plan revision. Two meetings were held with the stakeholders (January 2004 agenda and meeting summary, September 2004 agenda and meeting summary, graphic–display of suggested process to release plan documents to the public). The concept of "a rolling alternative" was adopted where adjustment would be made to the proposed Plan with continuing public collaboration and with the availability of new information.

In May 2005, the Forest Supervisor convened a workshop with stakeholders to present the new 2005 planning rule and discuss the possibility of continuing the GMUG Forest Plan under the new rule (agenda, meeting summary).

Community Open House Meetings to present the proposed Plan. *October – December 2004*

In the fall of 2004, key findings from the assessments and the first proposal was released to the public. This proposal was designed to achieve the desired future conditions discussed during the LWG meetings and was based on management themes and suitable uses by landscape unit. This proposal was developed by the District Rangers, their staffs and the core planning team considering key findings from the assessments and recommendations provided by landscape working groups.

The core planning team structured the public presentations in an open-house format to obtain public input on the proposed Plan and explain the concept of "rolling alternatives". The open house meetings provided information stations with Forest Service representatives (core planning team, district staff and resource specialists) for each program or resource area: planning process and status, terrestrial resources/upland ecosystems, watershed and minerals, and human dimensions. The stations provided an opportunity for the public to view large maps that graphically displayed existing management themes and proposed changes, both forest–wide and by landscape. Proposed changes in suitable uses, such as timber harvest and motorized recreation, were also displayed on separate maps.

This forum encouraged "one-on-one" questions, engaged those interested in more technical details, and provided background information to those new to the planning process. The public also contributed relevant information to more accurately describe current conditions.

The GMUG hosted 12 open houses with approximately 500 non-Forest Service participants (Summary of Open Houses). Less than half of these participants had some background information on the Forest Plan revision process through previous involvement with Landscape Working Groups. Participants could provide feedback verbally to Forest Service representatives, write suggestions on comment forms, write directly on the maps, make comments on flip charts at each information table, and mail

or email comments to the Forest Service. Over 400 comments or recommendations were received that applied to specific landscapes, geographic areas, or forest-wide issues and concerns. Comments also referred to the planning process, and specifics regarding management themes or suitable activities within each theme. Public comments received prior to March 1, 2005, were compiled by topic or geographic area. Although comments on the proposed Plan have been accepted throughout the process, those received prior to March 1, 2005, were most useful in reviewing and adjusting the Fall 2004 proposal.

Table 6. Open house meetings for public release of the initial proposed Plan (PPA) in the Fall of 2004.

Community	Date (# participants)	Location (open houses were 6-9 p.m.)	GA Info presented
Lake City	October 28, 2004 (11)	Lake City Community School	Gunnison Basin & San Juans
Gunnison	November 3, 2004 (41)	Aspinall Center	Gunnison
Crested Butte	November 4, 2004 (48)	Crested Butte Community School	Gunnison Basin
Ridgway	November 9, 2004 (27)	Ridgway Community Center	San Juans & Uncompahgre Plateau
Telluride	November 16, 2004 (26)	Telluride Community School	San Juans & Uncompahgre Plateau
Norwood	November 11, 2004 (33)	Norwood Community Center	San Juans & Uncompahgre Plateau
Collbran	November 23, 2004 (14)	Plateau Valley School	Grand Mesa
Hotchkiss	November 30, 2004 (68)	Memorial Hall/Public Library	Grand Mesa & North Fork Valley
Cedaredge	December 2, 2004 (46)	Cedaredge Community Center	Grand Mesa & North Fork Valley
Grand Junction	December 7, 2004 (93)	Museum of Western Colorado	Grand Mesa & Uncompahgre Plateau
Montrose	December 9, 2004 (60)	Montrose Pavilion	San Juans & Uncompahgre Plateau
Delta	December 14, 2004 (30)	Bill Heddles Recreation Center	North Fork Valley, Uncompahgre Plateau, & Grand Mesa

SPRING 2005 PROPOSED PLAN

In the spring of 2005, the planning team met with each District Ranger, staff and resources specialists to discuss management themes and suitable uses based on updated resource analysis, landscape working group recommendations, and public comments received to date. As a result of these discussions, some areas were changed to better represent future desired conditions. These discussions prompted adjustments in the proposal and resulted in the Spring 2005 proposed Plan.

The Spring 2005 proposal was posted on the website and presented to various stakeholders and focus groups during the spring, and summer of 2005. A newsletter was distributed to those on the GMUG Forest Plan Revision mailing list notifying the public of the transition to the new 2005 planning rule, the adjusted proposal (Spring 2005), and the continuation of the comment period. Public comments were received throughout this period (March through December 2005).

Between February and November 2005, approximately 20 meetings were held with various stakeholders and focus groups, including representatives from the following: San Miguel County Commissioners, Crested Butte Town Council, Mayor of Paonia, Gunnison County Administrator, Delta County Treasurer, Delta County Board of County Commissioners, Ridgway-Ouray Town Council, Delta and Paonia Rotary Clubs, Delta Kiwanis Club, Western Slope Environment Resource Council (WSERC), High Country Citizens Alliance, Sheep Mountain Alliance, Wilderness Society, Public Lands Partnership, Backcountry Snowsports Alliance, Uncompahgre Valley Association, Western Colorado Congress (WCC), Ouray Trails Group and Nordic Council, San Juan Hut System, backcountry skiers, North Fork Valley Coal Working Group, Mountain Coal Company, Arch Western Bituminous, Oxbow Mining, Inc., Bowie Resources, Upper North Fork Valley (NFV) Planning Committee, WSERC Gas Committee, Falcon Seaboard, SG Interests, Gunnison Energy Corporation, Laramie Energy LLC, Riviera, GGI, Colorado Coal Mining Association, Delta Timber, Western Excelsior Corp, and CSU Agriculture Extensions Service.

The Forest Service core planning team briefed groups on key findings, the Forest Plan proposals, and how it relates to their specific areas of interest. Discussions included current and future motorized uses, future coal exploration and energy development, existing oil and gas leases, available lease areas, implications to current oil and gas leasing regulations, municipal watershed protection, protection of current roadless areas, current socio-economic information, clarification of suitable uses within Theme 3 management, and discussions on the theme changes from the current Forest Plan to the proposed Plan (Fall 2004 and Spring 2005). Other topics included implications of the new (2005) planning rule, the 2005 roadless inventory and evaluation, status of the Gunnison Travel Management Plan, and the need for a revised oil and gas leasing decision following release of the Forest Plan.

The stakeholder groups, along with the general public sent the Forest Supervisor and core planning team hundreds of comments, recommendations, and concerns in response to the Spring 2005 proposal. These were considered and discussed, along with continually emerging key findings and trends.

The proposal was again adjusted and the suitable activities occurring within each management theme further refined. These adjustments resulted in the November 2005 proposed Plan.

NOVEMBER 2005 PROPOSED PLAN

On November 2, 2005, a basic summary of the proposed Plan using management theme maps was released to the public at the Colorado Roadless Task Force meeting in Delta, Colorado. Forest-wide maps of the proposed management themes and suitable uses were made available along with the new (2005) roadless inventory and

evaluation report. This information was also on the GMUG Planning website. From November 2005 through February 2006, several meetings with individuals and groups were held to discuss the proposed Plan maps, suitable uses, and specific components of the proposed Plan (Focus Group and Stakeholder Meetings).

Stakeholder and focus group meetings were held to brief various groups on the maps depicting desired conditions (management themes) and suitable uses presented as part of the proposed Forest Plan. These meetings were held with the following individuals or groups: Colorado Roadless Task Force, Senator Ken Salazar's staff, Congressman John Salazar's staff, Ute Tribal business committee, livestock grazing permittees (from Gunnison, Whitewater, Norwood, Paonia, Crawford, Hotchkiss, and Powderhorn), North Fork Valley Coal Working Group, Public Lands Partnership, Mesa County Cattleman's Association, Blue Ribbon Coalition, Colorado Off- Highway Vehicle Coalition, Colorado 500 Inc, Thunder Mountain Wheelers Association, Western Slope ATV Association, Mountain Trail Riders Group, Snow Cruisers, and representatives of various local off-highway vehicle dealerships.

Presentations and discussions on the new GMUG (2005) roadless inventory and proposed Plan management direction for these areas were provided to the following: Ouray Trails Group, Delta County Commissioner, Delta Chamber of Commerce, Western Colorado Congress, Black Canyon Audubon Society, Oxbow Mining, Inc., and the Public Lands Partnership.

The proposed Forest Plan, Comprehensive Evaluation Report, and Comprehensive Assessments were made available to the public in Summer 2006 .