

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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December 16, 2009

Charlie Richmond, Forest Supervisor
USDA Forest Service
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests
2250 Highway 50
Delta, CO 81416-2485

RE: GMUG decision to deny proposed ski area expansion onto Snodgrass Mountain

Dear Supervisor Richmond,

The San Miguel County Board of Commissioners wishes to personally thank you and express its support for the recent Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forest decision regarding Crested Butte Mountain Resort's proposed ski area expansion onto Snodgrass Mountain. As a county within the GMUG National Forest, we have a vested interest in decisions made by the GMUG that may affect residents of San Miguel County. We have reviewed the November 5th decision letter from the GMUG National Forest to Crested Butte Mountain Resort and CNL Lifestyles, Inc and have concluded that an appropriate process was followed in reaching the decision to deny the ski area expansion proposal.

San Miguel County strongly supports the wise use of National Forest resources. The US Forest Service has been charged with sustaining the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests to meet the needs of present and future generations. We applaud this fundamental obligation and the GMUG National Forest for their decision which clearly takes this direction quite seriously. San Miguel County understands that the GMUG decision was based on numerous factors that led to a conclusion that the proposal was not in the interest of present or future generations. The letter cites a divided community, displacement of current recreation uses, economic considerations, geologic hazards, avalanche hazards, boundary management issues, Roadless Area conflicts, impacts to Canada lynx, and the unlikelihood of success within a NEPA review.

San Miguel County commends the US Forest Service for considering all of these critical factors in reviewing the proposal. Decisions about local, regional and national public interest - both short-term and long-term - are rarely simple. As Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack recently stated, "A healthy and prosperous America relies on the health of our natural resources, and particularly our forests. America's forests supply communities with clean and abundant water, shelter wildlife, and help us mitigate and adapt to climate change". San Miguel County shares this sentiment with Secretary Vilsack and is committed to working to ensure healthy forests within San Miguel County.

We appreciate that we can expect a high level of analysis and consideration to the long-term implications of proposals within the GMUG and that concerns of all users and owners of our public lands will be weighed equally in Forest Service decisions.

In conclusion, San Miguel County appreciates that decisions are being made that consider the cherished, valuable resources of the GMUG. We support efforts by the US Forest Service, such as the Snodgrass decision process, to ensure that conflicting demands on the forest are taken into consideration and that forest resources are protected for the long-term benefit of our communities.

Thank you for your attention to our views and concerns.

Very Truly Yours,

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY, COLORADO
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Elaine R.C. Fischer, Chair

Pc: Rick Cables, Regional Forester, USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region
Honorable Secretary Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture
Honorable John T. Salazar, US House of Representatives 3rd District
Honorable Mark Udall, US Senate, Colorado
Honorable Michael Bennett, US Senate, Colorado
Town of Crested Butte
Gunnison County
High Country Citizens Alliance