

RESPONSE TO SUMMARIZED SUBSTANTIVE RFA PUBLIC COMMENTS

GENERAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS		RESPONSE
1.	Letters written in opposition to campground closure including: Quartz, Middle Quartz, Cebolla, Hidden Valley, Spruce, Big Blue, Roosevelt, Pitkin, Deer Lakes, Dorchester, Snowblind, Big Cimarron, Gothic, Spring Creek, Gold Creek and Avery.	The GMUG re-evaluated the campgrounds in light of the 72 individual comments and decided to keep several of the smaller campgrounds at reduced development levels instead of decommissioning completely. For example, Big Blue, Spruce, Hidden Valley, Middle Quartz, Dorchester and Gold Creek Campgrounds will be converted to dispersed camping areas. Gothic, Pitkin, Deer Lakes, Snowblind and Spring Creek CGs will remain as is. Cebolla cg will be converted to day-use fishing access only.
2.	Reducing opportunities for people to camp in the wild is the wrong way to go.	The GMUG RFA resulted in only removing 6 sites from public use and is maintaining a range of development for users. In addition the forest continues to provide plenty of dispersed and remote camping opportunities. While items like tables and grills are planned for removal, or eventual phase out many toilets will remain to decrease the environmental and health & safety issues.
3.	Keep hunting season in mind when thinking of closing campgrounds.	While the RFA did reduce the season of use at many sites, it continued to keep open but with reduced services, the sites with the most use. The majority of hunting use on the GMUG is accomplished through dispersed camping.
4.	Reduce or eliminate day use fees at picnic areas and trailheads in an effort to provide more exposure to nature.	The GMUG still has three developed picnic sites that are free to the public: Fruita Picnic, Silver Jack Picnic, and Na-gach Picnic.
5.	More information about the cgs should be given to the public on the website: differentiation between cgs, pg and trailheads; show revenue generated and amenities available at each site.	The GMUG does have most of this information available on the web at http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/gmug/recreation/index.shtml#RFA
6.	Charge overnight fees on a graduated scale that reflect the need for the more costly infrastructure required for the larger RV.	Over night fees are regulated by the Concessionaire. The concessionaire is allowed to charge what the market will bare.
7.	Consider the basic needs of the general public and its ability to pay when considering public policy in these matters.	The Forest has maintained a range of developed camping sites. In addition to the no-fee dispersed camping sites, the Forest has 4 non-fee developed CGs, 3 non-fee

		developed picnic areas, 2 non-fee rafting access areas and several non-fee trailheads and interpretive sites. However, most of the developed sites on the GMUG are concessioned. The Concessionaire regulates the fees; the Forest does not have control over this. The concessionaire is allowed to charge what the market will bare.
8.	Take out toilets if you must but leave the infrastructure, ie. parking and roads.	The GMUG did leave parking and roads and in some cases toilets at sites that will be converted to dispersed use. Crag Crest, Hay Press, Kiser Creek, Sheep Corrals, Dorchester, and Slumgullion cg are examples of this.
9.	\$4.00/night for electricity is too high a cost for electricity.	Over night fees are regulated by the Concessionaire. The concessionaire is allowed to charge what the market will bare.
10.	The FS is losing the value of the "remote" campground.	The GMUG RFA resulted in only removing 6 sites from public use and is maintaining a range of camping opportunities for users. In addition the forest continues to provide plenty of dispersed and remote camping opportunities.
12.	At a time when more and more people are recreating and using public lands, this current administration is decreasing federal budget for National Forests. More amenities are needed not less.	The GMUG RFA resulted in only removing 6 sites from public use and is maintaining a range of development for users. In addition the forest continues to provide plenty of dispersed and remote camping opportunities. While items like tables and fire rings are planned for removal/eventual phase-out, many toilets will remain to decrease the environmental and health & safety issues.
ISSUES/CONCERNS		RESPONSE
13.	<p>Rising costs of developed camping are discouraging use at developed sites and will force more people to disperse camp. While some comments indicated a willingness to pay for day use or more for camping in an effort to keep campgrounds from closing, many comments were opposed to increasing amenities because it meant higher fees. Many comments indicated the current users don't want higher standards/more amenities; they want the costs minimized, not an increase in additional fees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Costs are almost as much as a hotel room, and a hotel has all the comforts 	The Forest has maintained a range of camping sites from rustic to highly developed. In addition to the non-fee dispersed sites, the Forest has 4 non-fee developed cgs, 3 non-fee developed picnic areas, 2 non-fee rafting access areas and several non-fee trailheads and interpretive sites. However, most of the developed sites on the GMUG are concessioned. The Concessionaire regulates the fees; the Forest does not have control over this. The concessionaire is allowed to charge what the market will bare.

	<p>of home.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “A decrease in developed cgs will encourage the concessionaire to increase costs at remaining sites to make up for fee loss. ▪ “Fee policy is being used to control and direct traffic (displace users), not facility improvement. 	
14.	<p>Closing campgrounds will increase dispersed use and create the following environmental issues and concerns (very high concern):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impacts to the ground i.e. soil erosion from human caused compaction. ▪ Health and Safety issues from insufficient toilets/trash containers and improperly disposed human waste and trash. ▪ Lack of developed fire rings will increase the threat of fire in the forest and nearby communities like Pitkin and Crested Butte. ▪ Both sanitation issues and fire issues threaten the water quality of Pitkin and Crested Butte. ▪ Increase in dispersed camping will largely go unmanaged, irresponsible campers will proliferate above impacts to the ground exponentially because FS does not have the man power to police rules/regulations of proper camping, including ensuring the ‘stay limit’ and off road vehicular use. ▪ Closing cgs and removing facilities but allowing dispersed use at those previously existing sites is promoting a distorted variety of dispersed camping. Dispersed camping by its nature should be self contained and dispersed. However, the FS is promoting organized, congregated areas that result in resource damage, environmental and management issues as well as create management issues and burdens within the concession program. ▪ Closing cgs will put more stress on the remaining cgs that stay open and strain surrounding environment with increased foot and car traffic. 	<p>The GMUG will continue to monitor resource impacts at dispersed sites, especially high use areas. If the Forest determines that significant impacts are occurring or will likely occur, then the Forest will address acquiring additional toilets and/or physically designating dispersed camping sites in appropriate areas.</p> <p>The Forest will continue to maintain its developed campgrounds but cannot provide a fire ring at every dispersed site although some dispersed sites may have fire rings. However, safety information regarding fires in dispersed areas will continue to be provided and available to forest users.</p> <p>The Forest closely assessed which campgrounds to completely decommission and physically close and where to allow dispersed use to occur.</p> <p>When evaluating the campgrounds which the RFA recommended closure, all of them had low use. Many campgrounds on the GMUG are under utilized and have room to absorb more use.</p>

15.	<p>Closing Gothic Campground is contrary to expressed need in the Crested Butte area. The Town of Crested Butte has been asking for increased developed camping facilities for several years. The large number of dispersed users in this area has created a series of problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human fecal material in streams ▪ Proliferation of user created pullouts and parking areas ▪ Deliberate and inadvertent vandalism of research sites ▪ Harassment of researchers ▪ Conflicts between campers and science 	<p>The Forest will retain Gothic Campground with no changes. Future plans for the site including looking for expansion opportunities although terrain features may prohibit this. The Forest will also seek partnership opportunities for potential campground expansion.</p> <p>The Forest is also looking at improving the Lake Irwin Campground and associated day-use area. The Town of Crested Butte should look at additional opportunities for developed camping facilities on non-federal lands as this would likely be an economic boost to the community. Much of the “long-term” dispersed camping that occurs in the Crested Butte area is due to the high cost of living in Crested Butte – the influx of dispersed campers around resort communities is an issue throughout ski towns in the Rocky Mountain West.</p>
16.	<p>Several comments indicated that Pitkin Campground should not add electricity to its sites. The electricity will increase fee costs, invite a different kind of users to the campground, over crowd the campground and increase noise levels, threatening quiet nature of the campground.</p>	<p>Any proposed future improvements will have to go through public scoping and will be evaluated at that time. One can argue also that adding electricity to the units would actually make things quieter due to the amount of generators that wouldn't have to be running.</p>
17.	<p>Spring Creek Campground is experiencing a decrease in use because the water system doesn't function properly.</p>	<p>The Forest plans to replace the handpump at Spring Creek Campground in the future.</p>
18.	<p>Not having water available at Quartz and Middle Quartz cgs is decreasing the revenues in Quartz Valley.</p> <p>Improve Quartz and Middle Quartz cg to include road repairs, pressurized water, pull-through camper parking, larger parking spurs, upgraded and increased number of camping sites, and a black water dump.</p>	<p>Revenues at Quartz and Middle Quartz cgs have gone down because of the over all poor condition of the cgs. The water system at Middle Quartz has been defunct over 8 years. The water source at Quartz was a moving spring too close to the surface. It will be very difficult to provide water at this location in the future. Partners are being sought to maintain and operate Middle Quartz cg as a dispersed camping area with current amenities.</p>
19.	<p>Campground closures in Hinsdale County and Lake City will hurt an already struggling economy.</p>	<p>The GMUG evaluated economic impacts to Hinsdale County. The Forest decided to keep Hidden Valley and Spruce Campgrounds as dispersed camping areas and to convert Cebolla Campground to a day-use area. Big</p>

		<p>Blue Campground will also be converted to a dispersed camping area. Since Williams Creek and Deer Lakes cgs don't fill to capacity and BLM, county/private opportunities also exist in the area, the Forest has assessed that the County will not receive much, if any, impact.</p> <p>What we are ultimately trying to achieve is a high quality camping experience in those sites that are actually being utilized. The County benefits by having visitors highly satisfied with their camping experience in Hinsdale County.</p>
20.	Campground closures in Gunnison County will hurt the economy.	<p>The GMUG evaluated economic impacts to Gunnison County. Since very few cgs will be completely removed and the majority of cg capacity will remain, the Forest has assessed that the County will not receive much if any impact.</p> <p>What we are ultimately trying to achieve is a high quality camping experience in those sites that are actually being utilized. The County benefits by having visitors highly satisfied with their camping experience in Gunnison County.</p>
21.	Current use patterns on the Grand Mesa indicate an increase in illegal dumping on the Mesa which is resulting in health and safety concerns.	The Forest will look into whether illegal dumping is increasing and determine if future toilets at dispersed sites are needed.
22.	Leave picnic tables at Spring Creek Pass but remove fire rings and install day use signs.	The GMUG concurs with this comment and this is what we are planning to do.
24.	<p>Hinsdale County Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lake City is willing to place Cebolla, Spruce and Hidden Valley cg facilities on their website to help promote their use. ▪ Comments indicated that a few users were receptive to paying day use fees and over night fees to keep Cebolla, Spruce and Hidden Valley cg facilities from closing. 	The GMUG is working with a Lake City partner/volunteer group to help maintain and operate Spruce and Hidden Valley CG as dispersed camping areas. Cebolla CG will be converted to a day-use area for fishing access. Donation tubes are available at Spruce and Hidden Valley to help offset the operation and maintenance fees.
25.	<p>Pitkin Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep Pitkin cg as is; keep non-hosted areas of Pitkin closed. ▪ Several comments were in opposition to 	The RFA results recommend that Quartz Campground be decommissioned fully and physically closed. However, Middle Quartz campground will be converted to a

	<p>adding electrical hook-ups to Pitkin cg, and preferred to use upgrade funds to keep Quartz and Middle Quartz open. However, a few comments indicated support for electric hook-ups. Shower stalls were also requested and deemed more important than electricity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue with utilization of seasonal hosts within Pitkin area. ▪ Keep Pitkin Area cgs open for a longer season. ▪ Use Quartz and Middle Quartz cgs as over flow for Pitkin cg or increase the size of Pitkin cg. ▪ Establish a black water/dump station instead of electricity at Pitkin cg. ▪ If a closure has to occur, close Quartz Creek cg only. 	<p>dispersed camping area.</p> <p>Pitkin Campground is a concessioned site that is open until October 1. Usually snow sets in mid to late October and closes access to the site.</p> <p>The Forest will evaluate the need and feasibility of any future proposals to increase amenities like electricity or disposal as part of future planning and scoping, but funding is not available at this time. The Forest will also look at the feasibility of increasing the size of Pitkin Campground.</p>
26.	<p>Crested Butte Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If Gothic cg must be removed, at least provide a toilet or porta-potty for the East River Valley area. ▪ Develop a new campground in Slate River Valley area, due to ongoing dispersed use increasing every year. ▪ Encourage the development of a dispersed camping strategy for each River Valley near Crested Butte, addressing signage, road closures, camping in flood plains, and portable/permanent toilets. ▪ The Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory is willing to help the FS develop and implement a master plan for the area, as well as invest funds to maintain restrooms and serve as host volunteer. 	<p>The Forest will retain Gothic Campground with no changes. Future plans for the site including looking for expansion opportunities although terrain features may prohibit this. The Forest will also seek partnership opportunities for potential campground expansion or new construction in the Crested Butte area.</p> <p>The Forest plans on evaluating and getting a handle on dispersed use in many of its popular drainages in the future. The Forest appreciates the willingness of RMBL to help out as you have already demonstrated through cost-sharing of the port-a-potty at the Copper Lake/Judd Falls Trailhead.</p>
27.	<p>Don't add electricity to Rosy Lane cg, except maybe a few sites. This campground should be indicated on Reservation System.</p>	<p>The majority of use in Rosy Lane campground comes from users who bring generators. Because of this high generator use, the Forest is trying to accommodate user needs and noise levels. Future proposals to add electricity will go through normal planning and scoping processes.</p>
28.	<p>Establish centralized public showers, dumping station and trash disposal site on the Grand Mesa in addition to more day use facilities.</p>	<p>The Forest will evaluate the need and feasibility of such a venture as part of future planning and scoping, but funding is not available at this time.</p>
29.	<p>City of Fruita is willing to be a partner to help out the Fruita Division.</p>	<p>The Forest has accepted help from the Fruita Division and will continue to maintain and</p>

30.	<p>Establish ½ to 1 mile radius camping restrictions within developed camping boundaries at the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rivers End cg north to Dinner Station along the river (GU). ▪ Texas Creek north of Rivers End cg (GU). ▪ Trickle Park Area (GV). ▪ Rocky Road east of Mosca (GU), primary concern area for closure. 	<p>operate this day use site.</p> <p>The Forest will review the circumstances surrounding these sites and evaluate whether closure orders are necessary.</p>