

# ROCC PUBLIC LAND COMMITTEE - MARCH 16 BUSINESS MEETING REPORT

TOPIC: Wildlife and plant preservation and protection on Ouray County public lands:  
Uncompaghre National Forest, BLM and land within 25' to Hwy 550 & Hwy 62

## **BACKGROUND:**

1. Committee members hiked around Round Top to evaluate the shooting range and migration route of a large herd of elk near Round Top that settle on BLM land and Wolf property. BLM said they can't stop the unofficial shooting range use as long as shooters don't poach elk or endanger people. There is no safe elk crossing across Hwy 62.
2. The high count of roadkill just north of Ridgway on Hwy 550 must be mitigated through a wildlife crossing, fencing and encouraging nearby landowners to close their gates, especially when the canal water is turned off and when there's a full moon. Kelly Crane with Colorado Parks & Wildlife spoke at the last PLC meeting, presenting maps of elk and deer migration routes, and said that years ago they lowered the speed limit there but it didn't do any good. She said starting a grassroots fundraising drive to fund another wildlife crossing would get the CDOT's attention to possibly put it in their future plans.
3. Forests are the cornerstone of diversity, storing carbon pollution and provide crucial habitat for wildlife and plants. The Forest Service "manages" our forests, using money from the Federal Government according to their terms.

## **ISSUES:**

1. The increase of human population and residential development and resulting fragmented habitat of elk and deer has endangered their lives and numbers especially on Hwy 62 and 550. High Roadkill numbers are constant.
2. The CORE ACT's designating an extended wilderness area in the Mt Sneffles range overlooking the city of Ouray is stalled in congress.

## **ACTION:**

1. Get more data from the Forest Service, BLM and CDOT to guide plant and wildlife land use decisions. For example, the Uncompaghre Fritillary Butterfly is endangered so what is the Forest Service doing to protect it.
2. Provide visions and accountability ideas to the Ouray County Master Plan Revision Committee via the ROCC Ad Hoc Committee.
3. Have a committee member join ORRCA to give our concerns and information to raise their awareness and commitment.
4. Discover who owns the land next to the high roadkill areas and look into the possibility of setting up more protections.
5. For example, build higher fences, put up signs notifying drivers, lower the speed limit with a monitoring patrol car at dusk.