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Dear Madames and Sirs,

Please accept this public comment concerning the North Fork Coal Mining Area exception to the Colorado Roadless Rule (36 CFR 294.43(c)(1)(ix)). This exception was struck down by a decision of the District Court of Colorado in response to a challenge brought by the Sierra Club and several other environmental organizations. The National Forest Service now proposes to reinstate the North Fork Coal Mining Area exception as written in (36 CFR 294.43(c)(1)(ix)). I write to ask the National Forest Service not to do this, but to instead follow the Alternative to the Proposed Action. This allows for the continuation of current management following the court's decision to vacate the North Fork Coal Mining Area exception.

I urge the forest service to place a higher value on preservation of ecosystem quality than it currently does. This means prioritizing management for rare wildlife such as lynx and for preserving the water quality in rivers and streams including small streams. It also means not allowing the construction of further roads. In particular road construction in support of mining operations or for exploration related to possible future natural resource extraction should be avoided. Past misjudgement of the negative influences of mining and extractive resource exploration have led to a deterioration of populations of many species of wildlife on Forest service lands, for example the lynx. The way to stop this negative trend is to be much less willing to allow road building than the Forest Service has been in the past.