

**Rio Grande NF Forest Plan Revision  
Awareness Meeting  
October 1, 2014  
Antonito, CO  
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
Meeting Summary**

**Attendees**

Forest Plan Revision Team

- *US Forest Service*: Mike Blakeman, Andrea Jones, Adam Mendonca, Henry Provencio, John Rupe
- *Peak Facilitation*: Kristin Barker, Heather Bergman

1 member of the public was also present.

**Meeting Overview**

Members of the public attended this kickoff Awareness Meeting to learn about and participate in the upcoming Forest Plan revision for the Rio Grande National Forest. The purpose of the meeting was twofold: 1) to inform meeting participants about the Forest Plan and upcoming revision process, and 2) to learn how community members use and value the forest, and about their key goals for the planning process.

**Opening Remarks**

The attendee heard two brief opening remarks:

- Local District Ranger Andrea Jones welcomed the participant and stressed that the Forest Service (USFS) cares about and appreciates attendees' participation.
- Peak Facilitation Group President Heather Bergman introduced herself as the meeting facilitator and gave an overview of what to expect from this and future meetings.

**Presentations**

Two presenters spoke for ten minutes each about the Forest Plan and revision process.

**Forest Plan and Revision**

John Rupe, USFS Regional Planner, explained that the Forest Plan provides a high-level guide for all decisions and activities on the Rio Grande National Forest. All projects on the forest must follow the guidelines of the Forest Plan, which is revised every 15 years and amended as needed. USFS revised the key requirements of the Forest Plan in 2012 to include aspects of ecological and biological health, resource management, and sustainable forest use. [View the presentation slides at the RGNF Plan Revision website.](#)

USFS encourages members of the public to participate throughout the Forest Plan revision process, which consists of the following five steps:

<b>Plan Revision Step</b>	<b>Opportunity for Public Involvement</b>	<b>Associated USFS Document(s)</b>	<b>Timeline for Completion</b>
Assess current and possible conditions	Participate in assessment meetings	Assessment report	Summer 2015
Propose plan changes	Participate in planning meetings	Need For Change report	Fall 2015
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process	Comment on published Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Forest Plan draft(s)	Progressive drafts of Forest Plan and EIS, culminating in Final EIS	
Address objections and make decisions	Voice objections during 60-day objection period (if desired)	Record of Decision	2017
Monitor process and revise if necessary	Ongoing		

### ***Questions and Answers***

- *I participated the last time you revised this Forest Plan. What makes this revision process different from the one I participated in?* The new 2012 Planning Rule includes some pretty substantial differences. We now have many more opportunities for public participation, and we complete more assessment steps before we begin the NEPA process. Also, the travel management process now occurs separately, after the plan revision. The Forest Plan just addresses appropriate travel over general areas – travel management addresses specific routes.
- *Can you define what you mean by “sustainable recreation”?* We consider both ecological and fiscal components when determining how sustainable a recreation activity is.

### **Rio Grande National Forest Planning Process**

Heather Bergman, President of Peak Facilitation Group, detailed the overall plan revision process and its need for meaningful public participation. [View the presentation slides at the RGNF Plan Revision website.](#) Over the next year, USFS and the National Forest Foundation will host a series of public meetings to discuss specific forest management issues and areas of concern within the Rio Grande National Forest. Public participation at these meetings will help determine the scope of the planning process and will identify the key needs, values, and interests of stakeholders to be addressed in the Forest Plan. Additionally, local groups and organizations are encouraged to co-host meetings focusing on their issues of interest. In order to accomplish its goal of engaging the public frequently in a meaningful and transparent way, USFS brought in the National Forest Foundation and Peak Facilitation Group to ensure that meaningful public participation occurs throughout the planning process.

A new interactive website allows members of the public to answer questions, post comments and pictures, and be part of a conversation with community members and local leaders about the Rio Grande National Forest and the plan revision process: <http://riograndeplanning.mindmixer.com/>

## ***Questions and Answers***

- No questions were asked.

## **Electronic Polling**

The participant answered ten electronic polling questions identifying how individuals and their communities use and value the forest. The polling result can be found at the end of this summary.

## **Small Group Discussions**

The participant discussed questions about the Rio Grande National Forest and the plan revision process with Ms. Barker of Peak Facilitation Group. An overview of key themes from this discussion follows; a summation of the discussions from all awareness meetings (held in Antonito, South Fork, Alamosa, and Saguache) [is available online](#).

### ***1. How and where do you use the Rio Grande National Forest?***

The participant uses the forest for a personal yurt rental business, as a water source, and as a place to enjoy a variety of nonmotorized recreational opportunities. Cumbres Pass was the area most commonly mentioned.

### ***2. What roles and contributions does the Rio Grande National Forest make to this community?***

Economically, the forest brings money into Chama by providing a route for the scenic railroad, as well as by providing year-round recreational opportunities for visitors. Firewood cutting and livestock grazing also provide an economic boon.

### ***3. What are things in the current plan or how the forest is currently managed that you would like to see changed in the plan revision?***

The participant primarily expressed a desire to maintain and improve ecological integrity. Additional quiet recreation opportunities are also desired.

### ***4. What concerns do you have about the Forest Plan revision process?***

The attendee is pleased with the additional public participation opportunities but has concerns about how the plan will coordinate with other districts while maintaining appropriate regionalization. Forest health is also a strong concern, primarily in relation to beetle kill and fire risk.

### ***5. If you could only tell the Forest Service one thing about the forest, how you interact with the forest, and/or the plan revision process, what would it be?***

Have plan revision meetings in Chama and other smaller communities (e.g., Creede).



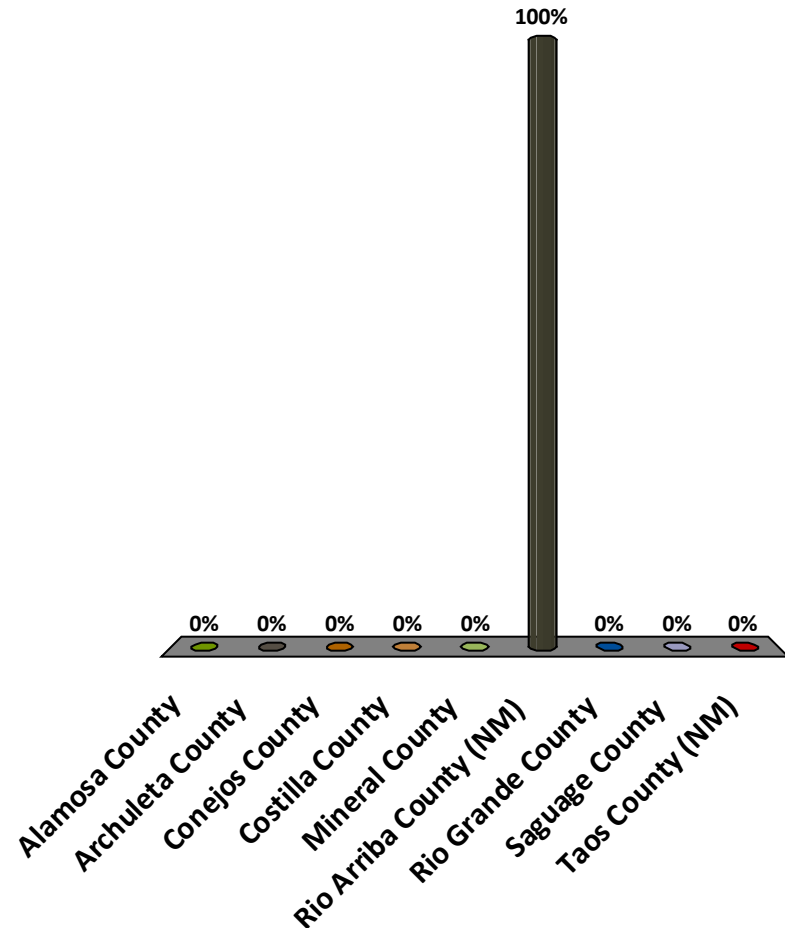
# Rio Grande National Forest Plan Revision

Community Awareness Meeting  
October 1, 2014  
7 pm – 9 pm  
ANTONITO

---

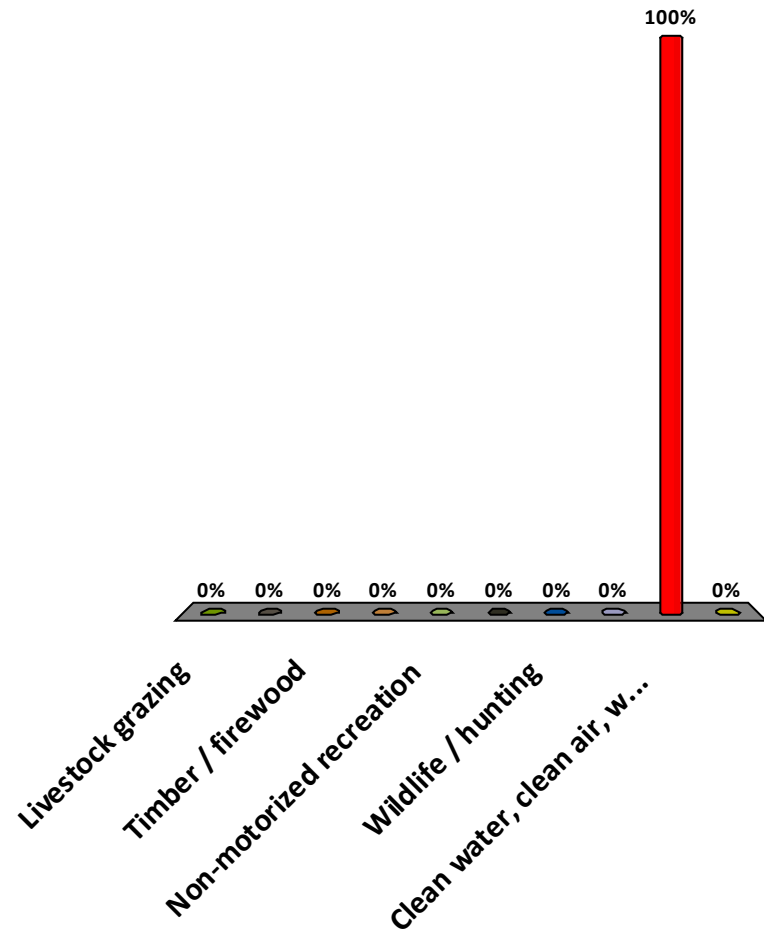
# 1. Where do you live?

- A. Alamosa County
- B. Archuleta County
- C. Conejos County
- D. Costilla County
- E. Mineral County
- F. Rio Arriba County (NM)
- G. Rio Grande County
- H. Saguage County
- I. Taos County (NM)



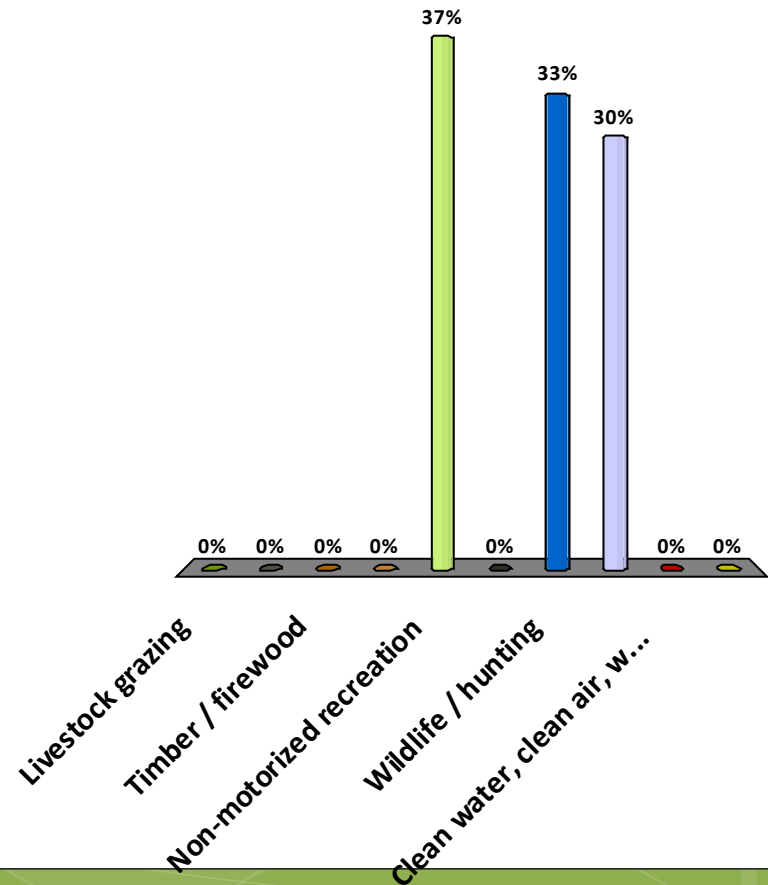
## 2. What is your primary interest in the Rio Grande National Forest?

- A. Livestock grazing
- B. Energy / minerals
- C. Timber / firewood
- D. Motorized recreation
- E. Non-motorized recreation
- F. Camping
- G. Wildlife / hunting
- H. Wilderness
- I. Clean water, clean air, water supply
- J. Other



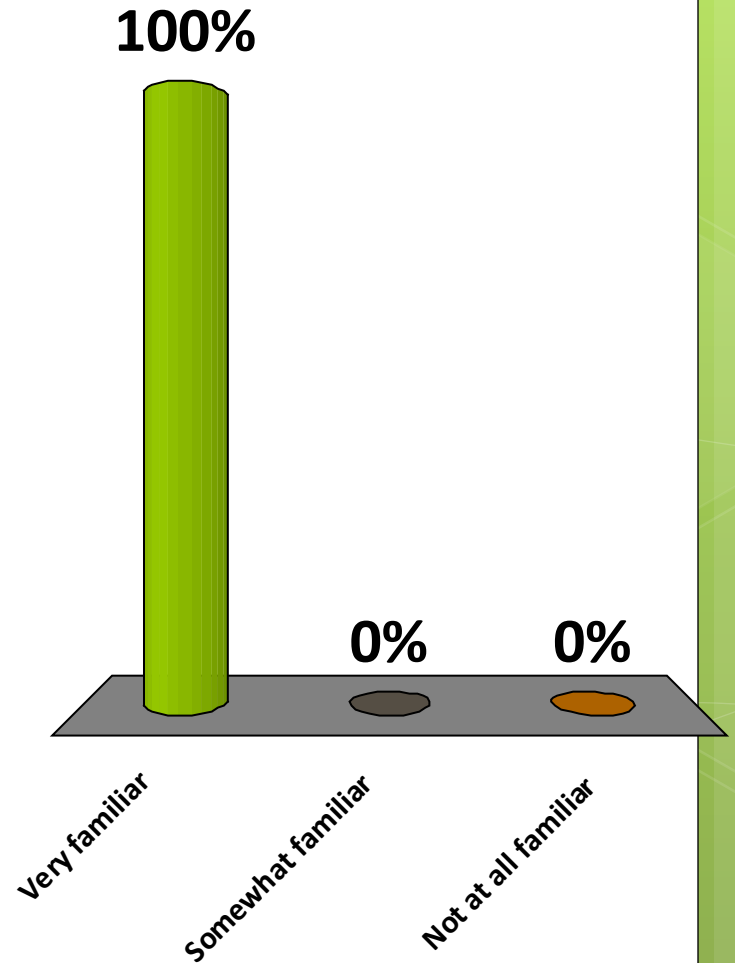
### 3. Which of the following are your **TOP 3** interests in the Rio Grande National Forest.

- A. Livestock grazing
- B. Energy / minerals
- C. Timber / firewood
- D. Motorized recreation
- E. Non-motorized recreation
- F. Camping
- G. Wildlife / hunting
- H. Wilderness
- I. Clean water, clean air, water supply
- J. Other



## 4. How familiar are you with the current Rio Grande National Forest Plan?

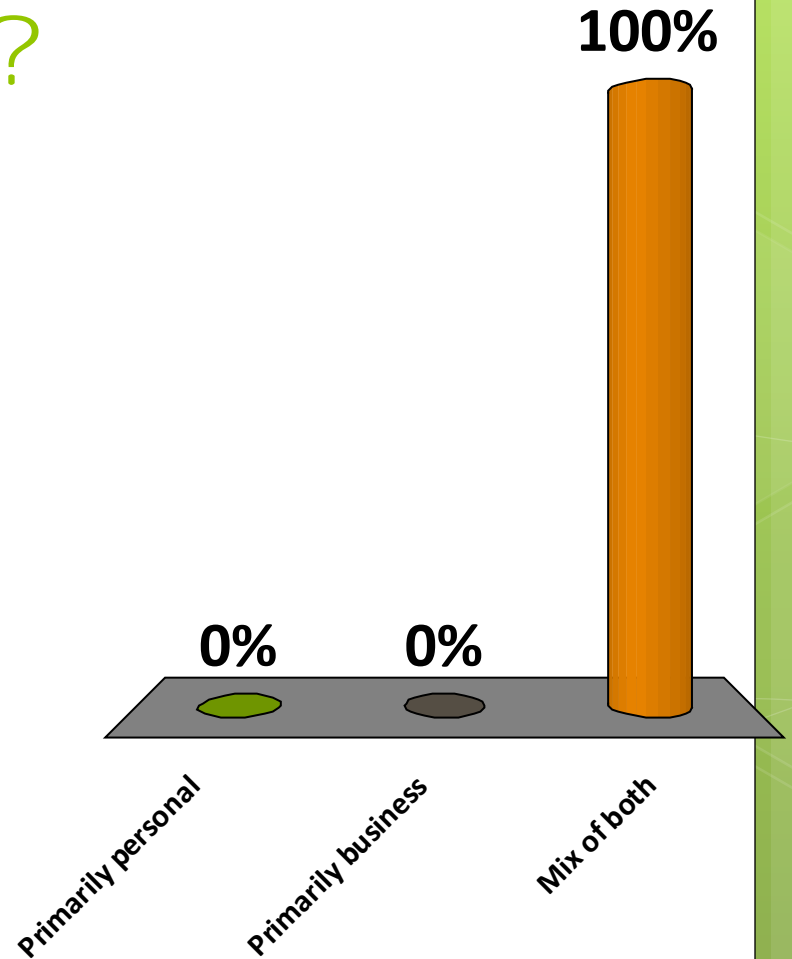
- A. Very familiar
- B. Somewhat familiar
- C. Not at all familiar





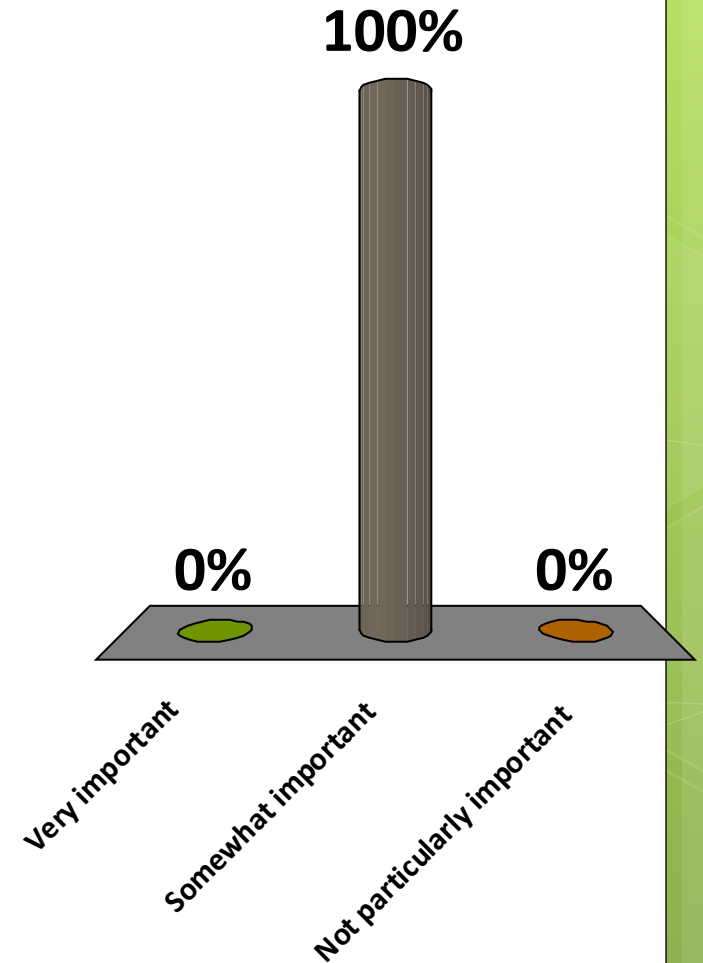
5. Do you use the Rio Grande National Forest primarily for personal or business purposes?

- A. Primarily personal
- B. Primarily business
- C. Mix of both



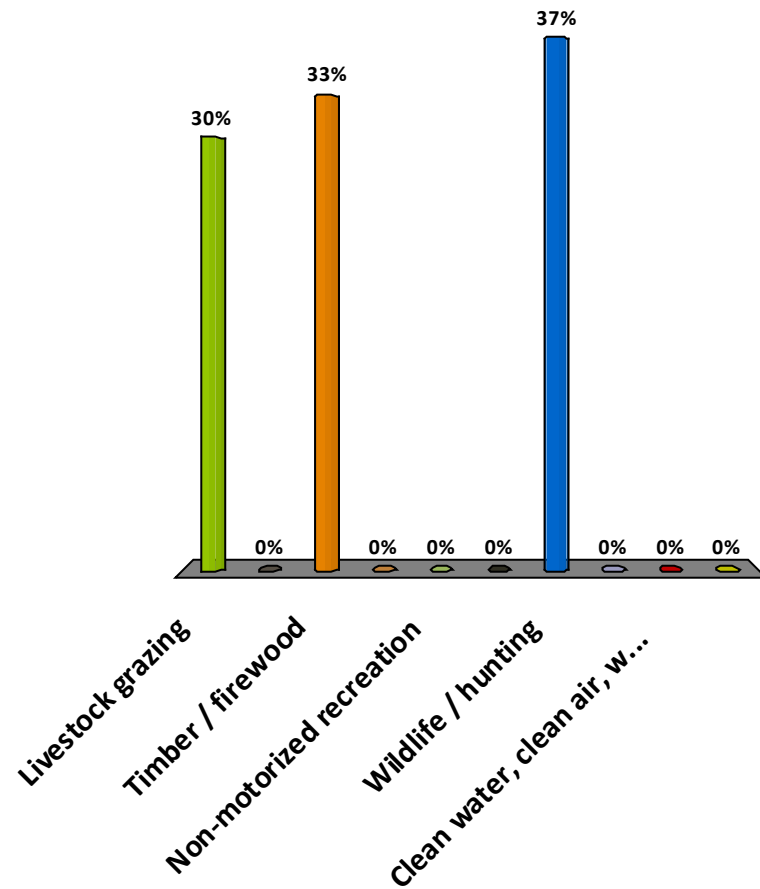
6. How important is the Rio Grande National Forest to your ability to make a living?

- A. Very important
- B. Somewhat important
- C. Not particularly important



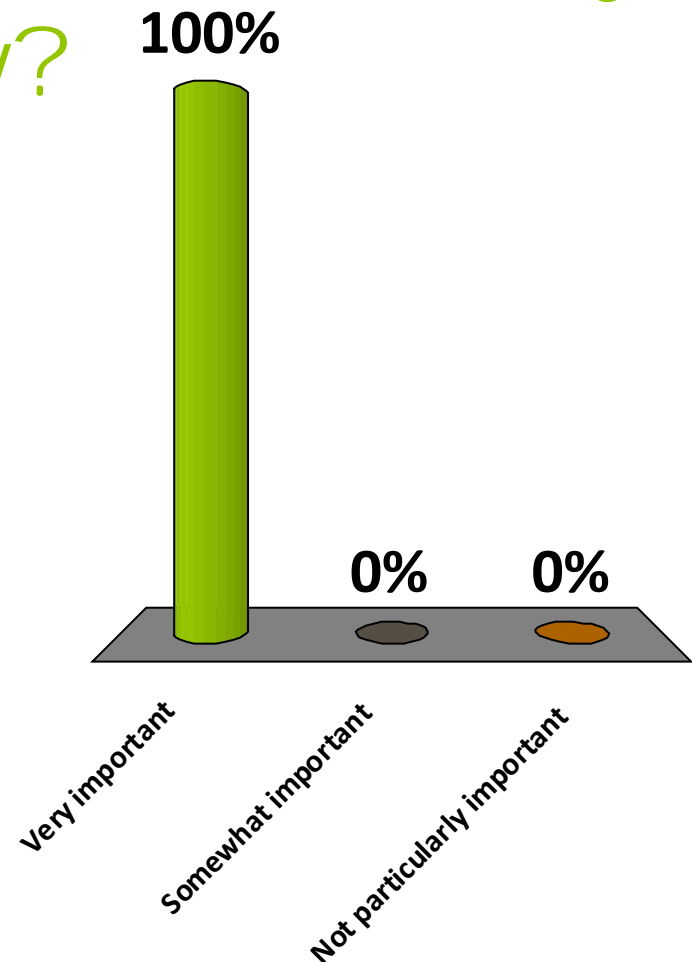
# 7. What are your community's TOP 3 uses or interests in the Rio Grande National Forest?

- A. Livestock grazing
- B. Energy / minerals
- C. Timber / firewood
- D. Motorized recreation
- E. Non-motorized recreation
- F. Camping
- G. Wildlife / hunting
- H. Wilderness
- I. Clean water, clean air, water supply
- J. Other



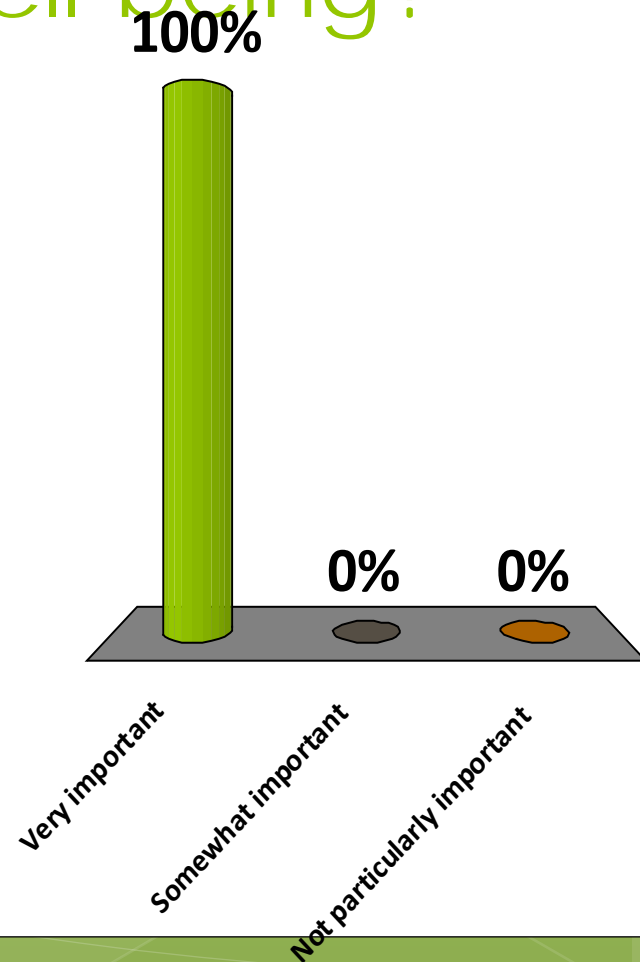
8. How important is the Rio Grande National Forest to your community's economic prosperity?

- A. Very important
- B. Somewhat important
- C. Not particularly important



9. How important is the Rio Grande National Forest to your community's social and cultural well-being?

- A. Very important
- B. Somewhat important
- C. Not particularly important



# 10. Which of these issues concerns you regarding the Rio Grande National Forest plan revision?

- A. Maintaining and building trust with stakeholders
- B. Maintaining multiple uses
- C. Addressing beetle kill impacts
- D. Wildfire preparation
- E. Maintaining forest health
- F. Protecting water supplies
- G. Ensuring developed and undeveloped recreation
- H. Other

