# Appendix D  Content Analysis Process

Public input on the Roadless Area Conservation Proposed Rule and Draft EIS has been analyzed using a process called content analysis.  Analysts use a systematic method of compiling and categorizing public response; this process allows them to identify the full range of public concerns regarding the proposed rule. Information from formal public meetings, letters, emails, faxes and other sources are all included in this analysis.  Content analysis is intended to help the interdisciplinary team identify issues which may lead to clarification of, revision of, or inclusion of technical information pursuant to developing a final rule.

Each response (i.e., each unique submission such as letter, fax, email, etc.) is assigned a unique identifying number.  This number allows analysts to link specific comments to original responses.  Once a response has been assigned a number it is read by an analyst.  The analyst codes the comments within the response according to the topic being addressed.  Since a respondent may address several different topics in the same response, an analyst may assign different codes to different comments within the same response.  These comments are then entered verbatim into a database under the code assigned to them.  Database reports are then generated in which comments are sorted by topic; this allows analysts to review all comments together which address a given topic.  Use of this database allows analysts to identify a wide range of public concerns and to analyze the relationships between them.  Finally, analysts prepare a written summary and analysis of public comment which includes a narrative description of public comment by topic, a list of public concerns identified by analysts, and supporting sample quotes from the public.

This process and the resulting summary are not intended to replace responses in their original form.  Rather, they provide a map to the letters and other input on file at the office of the Content Analysis Enterprise Team (CAET) in Salt Lake City.  Interested parties are encouraged to read public comment firsthand.

It is important for the public and interdisciplinary team members to understand that this process makes no attempt to treat input as if it were a vote.  Rather, the content analysis process serves to capture and organize the range of substantive comment, whether expressed by one or many respondents.  Finally, all interested parties, not just registered voters, are welcome to comment pursuant to NEPA.  Interested parties therefore include businesses, corporations, and special interest groups, as well as individuals regardless of age, nationality, or voter registration, eligibility, or status.  Content analysis does ensure that every response is considered at some point in the decision process.