



Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Desired Conditions and Management Area Comment Form



Public comments submitted, including names and street addresses of commenters will be available for public review as part of the planning record. Individual commenters may request the Forest Service to withhold their name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act by checking the box below. We will accept anonymous comments.

I wish to withhold my name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. Yes

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Subject of Comment:

Inventory of historic/prehistoric features

Comment:

See attached sheet

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Subject: Inventory of historic/prehistoric features

Recent research of military records has revealed information of a military presence in the Gallinas Mountains from at least 1854 to 1896. Surface surveys of the areas they utilized are revealing previously unrecorded historic and prehistoric native American features, particularly in the areas of the West Gallinas Spring (dubbed "Cement Spring" by the Forest Service in the twentieth century) and Indian Spring. Since there is a rock/cement tank below the East Gallinas Spring and military archives mention the east spring, the Forest Service land in that area also needs to be investigated.

In reference to lines 31-33 in particular, "inventory... is currently extremely limited". I am aware of the lack of funds for adequate manpower for the Forest Service to accomplish these inventories. I suggest the Forest Service take advantage of the local Torrance County Archaeological Society's trained SiteWatch volunteers to assist with these inventories in the Cibola National Forest. SiteWatch personnel are trained by representatives of the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division in recognizing and recording archaeological features, as well as confidentiality. Local SiteWatch personnel are familiar with area archaeology and terrain. Many of them have their own technological equipment used while performing their SiteWatch duties.

During a discussion with a Forest Service archaeologist at the meeting in Corona on July 28th, she brought up the idea of using Passport In Time volunteers for such inventories. A few years ago my granddaughter and I participated in a Passport In Time project in Arizona. Many of the participants were experiencing their first exposure to undeveloped archaeological sites and had little knowledge of archaeology. In order to complete their purpose for being there, the Forest Service archaeologists spent almost all their time teaching rather than researching. Passport In Time participants are selected by the Forest Service with no explanations of why or why not someone was selected. None of the participants I encountered were local people; in fact, as I recall, all of us were from other states. The agencies at the meeting in Corona kept talking about including local people in the planned changes. A Passport In Time project would give the Forest Service a means of eliminating local participation, which is counter to the supposed purpose of the meetings regarding the coming changes.

The historical/archaeological features in the Gallinas Mountains do not need to be developed for the public. What makes Camp Joseph Smith at the West Gallinas Spring significant is the fact that military historians have called it the most intact camp of its type extant, so its features should be preserved as is, limiting access as necessary. Many of those features are very old alligator juniper trees and wooden artifacts that will be lost in a wildfire. It is important to me that the areas there and around Indian Spring and East Gallinas Spring, as well as the trail connecting the three springs, be surveyed and recorded before that happens.

Sharon Hanna

