

March 28, 2015

Champe Green
Forest Planner
Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands
2113 Osuna Rd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

Re: Public Participation in Cibola National Forest Planning Process

Dear Forest Planner Green:

The Sandia Soaring Association helps to facilitate flying opportunities for member hang gliding and paragliding pilots in New Mexico and represents members who are interested in maintaining flying sites in New Mexico, such as the world-class Sandia Mountain site. We are writing to express our interest in the Forest Planning process for the Cibola National Forest.

The Sandia Soaring Association has enjoyed a long and valuable relationship with the Sandia Ranger District. We appreciate the challenges the Forest Service identified in its Assessment Plan of balancing its increasingly limited resources with increasingly heavy use of the Forest for recreational opportunities, and we appreciate that the Forest Service recognizes hang gliding and paragliding among the Forest's treasured recreational uses. We note that, although it did not receive express mention in the Assessment Plan, paragliding has become an increasingly popular wing type since the last iteration of the Forest Plan, and we hope that the planning effort recognizes that both hang gliding and paragliding pilots share an equivalent interest in maintaining safe, accessible sites in New Mexico. We look forward to continuing our relationship with the Forest Service and ensuring that even with limited management resources our safety-conscious organization can work with the Forest Service to ensure that such uses as hang gliding and paragliding can continue to flourish.

To that end, we look forward to monitoring the Forest Plan process and participating in any way that will help the Forest Service to understand our members' interests, activities, and efforts to keep the Forest accessible, untrammelled, and safe.

Sincerely,

David Coleman
President, Sandia Soaring Association