

Elaine Kohrman
Forest Supervisor, Cibola National Forest
2113 Osuna Rd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

September 25, 2015

Re: Citizen Proposal to the Cibola National Forest for Consideration in the Land Management Plan Revision

Dear Supervisor Kohrman:

The undersigned organizations are pleased to submit to the Forest Service a conservation proposal for consideration in one or more alternatives in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Cibola National Forest Land Management Plan revision.

The Cibola National Forest is ecologically diverse and geologically unique. Much of the Cibola is rugged, remote, and wild and offers incredible opportunities for unconfined, primitive recreation. The landscape has cultural, historic, and spiritual significance. The Cibola National Forest's land management planning process is an amazing opportunity to conserve some of New Mexico's most outstanding wilderness, wildlife, cultural and historic resources, recreational opportunities, and traditional way of life.

Our conservation proposal offers seven areas that we request the Forest Service recommend for wilderness in the forest plan and a separate Sandia Mountains Outdoor Education and Natural Area. The proposal includes a write up, photographs, and maps of each area, the methodology used to establish boundaries, documentation of on-the-ground conditions, and other supporting materials. We believe the information contained in this proposal and its appendices represents the best available scientific information, which the 2012 planning rule requires the agency to utilize.¹

We request that the CNF recognize the conservation values of the eight areas, including the Sandia Mountains Outdoor Education and Natural Area, and protect them by establishing plan components, including standards and guidelines, in multiple alternatives, including the preferred alternative, that would protect their roadless character and natural values. We also request that all of the proposal areas that we recommend for wilderness be included in the final wilderness inventory and evaluated for their wilderness character under the Chapter 70 process. We fully recognize that the CNF contains many more areas with important conservation values that deserve elevated protections in the forest plan. The coalition is requesting protections for these areas because we had limited resources to conduct fieldwork and document the conservation values, not because other areas do not merit consideration and protection.

¹ 36 C.F.R. § 219.3 (agency "shall use the best available scientific information to inform the planning process" and "shall document how [that] information was used to inform the assessment").

Further, roadless lands are ecologically important and play a critical role in ensuring the persistence of species, providing connectivity, and ensuring watershed functionality, which is only more important in light of climate change. Maintaining and enhancing the roadless character of these seven areas by recommending them for wilderness will contribute to the achievement of the substantive provisions in the planning rule at 36 CFR 219.8 through 219.10 related to ecological integrity and species diversity.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Supporting Organizations*

Albuquerque Wildlife Federation

Michael Scialdone, President

Backcountry Horsemen of New Mexico

John Young- Vice Chair

Cottonwood Gulch Foundation

Doña Ana County Associated Sportsmen

John Cornell, President

Great Old Broads for Wilderness

Susan Ostlie

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Amy Cole, Senior Field Officer and Attorney

National Wildlife Federation

Kathleen C. Zimmerman, Policy Director, Public Lands

New Mexico Archaeological Council

Toni Goar, Vicz President

New Mexico Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Laddie Mills, Co-Chair

New Mexico Mountain Club

Michael Grady, President

New Mexico Sportsmen

Oscar Simpson, State Chair

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

Mark Alison, Executive Director

New Mexico Wildlife Federation

Garrett VeneKlasen, Executive Director

The Wilderness Society

Michael Casaus, New Mexico State Director

Wild Turkey Sportsmen Association

C.J. Goin, President

* This list of supporting organizations is as of September 25, 2015. The list is dynamic and will continue to be updated.