

January 16, 2016

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

Re: Support for the Citizen's Conservation Proposal for the Cibola National Forest

I am writing to express my support for the proposed conservation areas put forth by the coalition of conservation, recreation, sportsmen and cultural resource protection organizations in their **Citizen's Conservation Proposal**, submitted September 25, 2015 to the Cibola National Forest.

The proposal identifies seven priority conservation areas that the Forest Service should recommend for wilderness in the Forest Plan and a separate Outdoor Education and Natural Area. These lands – in the San Mateo, Magdalena, Bear, and Datil Mountains, as well as the Greater Guadalupe Canyon in Sandoval County – are among the wildest lands left in New Mexico and they are ideal places to protect wilderness character. The proposed *Sandia Mountains Outdoor Education and Natural Area* would help forge stronger human connections to nature, encourage outdoor recreation and exploration, and share current thinking about the ecology and history of the Sandias.

Wilderness is the highest level of protection for our public lands and is designed to protect lands and wildlife in their natural state. These areas merit this protection, and I urge the Forest Service to recognize their vital ecological, geologic, cultural, historic, and recreational value.

In the face of ever-increasing threats of resource extraction and over- development, I urge you to safeguard these high value conservation lands now to protect our economy, natural heritage, opportunities for outdoor recreation, and livelihood for future generations. Please protect these priority lands in the Cibola National Forest by recommending them as Wilderness and designating the Sandia Mountains Outdoor Education and Natural Area in the Forest Plan.

over, please →

Sincerely,

Signature: Sue Gunkel

Date: 2/16/2016

Printed Name: Sue Gunkel

Address: 2634 Alogasca Ln NW ABO, NM

Email: suefredg@comcast.net

Phone: 505-842-1764

Ms. Kohman,

I have forests in my blood and the Cibola is a particular love. As the child of a forester who worked throughout Region 3 from the beginning of his career in the 1930s until the early 1950s, I spent many hours & days in the Cibola when most of its acreage was, in fact, wilderness. The love of the solitude, beautiful vistas, cool mountain nights became ingrained in my psyche.

As my uncle was ranger at Magdalena (before the consolidation of districts), my cousins & I were able to enjoy that country with him. When a teenager ~~uncle~~ cousin was ranger at Sandia District, at Mountainair and later worked at the Grants office. So, although my Dad had passed away at a young age when he was supervisor of the Deschutes NF, I continued my attachment to wild places.

My husband & I returned to Albuquerque as young people and hiked many of the trails in the Sandias, Manzanos, Gallinas, San Mateos, and Mt Taylor. We loved it when we got into wilderness and the density of people dropped.

I was involved in developing the Citizens Conservation Proposal for a year ^{at} the beginning of your forest planning process but illness and other circumstances caused me to discontinue my involvement. I know that a very diligent study of the areas recommended for Wilderness & other special statuses was conducted. The areas recommended need permanent protection for the health of the forest, meadows & watershed. And to allow for places that are sizeable wild life habitat. Last, but not unimportantly, these lands are needed so people have unspoiled country to gain the health enhancing advantages of solitude & naturalness.