

To: [FS-asnftravel](#)
Subject: Travel management plan comments
Date: Friday, October 11, 2019 5:01:42 PM

I would like to make comments on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest travel management plan revised DEIS, due by October 29, 2019.

First, I am concerned that with 371,000 miles of road in our current forest service system, funding for maintenance of these roads has declined over the last 20 years while public demand for these roads has escalated. My goal would be to have an environmentally and financially sustainable transportation system while meeting public needs. The national forest system is now required to identify the minimum road system (MRS) needed for safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of national forest lands.

Enforcement: We live in Sky Hi Retreat, with forest road 182 bordering our back yard. As far as we know, the Lakeside ranger district only has one law enforcement official and he is rarely reachable, especially on evenings or weekends when we get so much off road vehicle usage. Children and adult drivers race dangerously and noisily up and down the roads. We've seen garbage, building materials, old furniture, and even a dead dog dumped next to the Maverick ORV trail, about a half mile from our house. Several wildcat roads have been started nearby by abusive ORV drivers, who often just drive right next to "no motorized vehicle" signs or just rip them up and throw them away. These illegal ORV drivers ruin the hiking trails and bring unwanted noise and stinky air to the people quietly recreating on the hiking trails.

Another concern I have is the danger. We have friends who work in the ER or are EMTs who have reported to us accounts of tragic accidents, often taking life and limb, or permanently disabling ORV riders. This often involves children. The farther these people are from emergency medical services, the greater the cost to the community.

Funding: with decreased maintenance of ORV trails, we see erosion, depletion of resources, pollution of our waterways with oil and gas runoff, and introduction of invasive grasses on ORV tires. A local Cienega, at the base of the pet Mullen mountain, has received ORV abuse for over 20 years and we are seeing diminishing native grasses and wildflowers growing there.

Watersheds: Illegal ORV abuse crosses a drainage (below Pat Mullen Mtn, off road 9721S- drivers have ignored or removed several signs that were erected stipulating "no motorized vehicles) that feeds our aquifer where we get water from our well. The erosion caused by this wildcat trail through the draw is one reason why our well may be going dry and we are now having to drill deeper for water.

Dispersed camping: The dispersed camping we have seen nearest our house often involves heavy RVs and trailers hauled by big vehicles that beat down the earth and cause fire danger during the fire season; these campers often want to have a raging campfire at night. It seems we have enough dispersed camping sites as it is and we don't need to add more.

Economic gains to the White Mountain community: while I am sure the visitors to the forest who bring ORVs contribute to the economy here, I see more people parked at our hiking trails and for hiking, biking, or horseback riding. We live by 3 such trailheads and the cars parked there for such recreation greatly outnumber the either nonexistent or minimal vehicles parked at the Maverick ORV Trail parking lot off of Forest Road 182.

Elk retrieval: In the 30+ years I have lived in the area, we often see a motorized vehicle follow another ORV track which then becomes a wildcat trail and thus more rutted and damaged. Elk retrieval of 1 mile in motorized vehicles could cause such abuse. Not that long ago, elk hunters retrieved their elk with pack animals or with their own effort on foot. A return to that practice could save the land from vehicular damage.

Climate change: getting away from fossil fuels and remediation is needed to restore our forest and vegetation in order to cool the planet, equalize our weather, and create a habitable earth for our future generations. It is for this reason that I encourage you to support Alternative 3 of the Travel Management Plan, the environmental alternative.

Thank you,
Dorothy Reed-Inman

