

Ms. Saba Bennett

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April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### Master Development Plan for Camp Lawton Objection

I am writing to object to the Master Development Plan for Camp Lawton being planned for an incredibly sensitive area on Mount Lemmon, Organization Ridge. Not only is the plan far too large, at 72 acres, but the “comprehensive approach” which eliminates environmental assessments is a death knell for the sensitive ecosystem in the area which will have long-term deleterious effects for the entire sky island. The Boy Scouts have earned thousands of abuse lawsuits in the past five years, signaling the demise of a corrupt organization. Thus, the “Boy Scouts” project seems to be a thinly-disguised effort to profit from increased tourism in an area that is already over-used. The effort to shove this development down the throats of taxpayers and stakeholders with little to no opportunity to register objections is a red flag for the integrity of the project. Posting the details of the plan at the Sabino Canyon Visitor Center, which has been closed for several weeks, reveals the determination of project planners to run roughshod over the thousands of Pima County residents who strongly object to this project with meager access to a means of redress.

Firstly, the project is far too ambitious for this area. The traffic and pollution which will be generated is not addressed in any way. The watersheds in the area will suffer irreparable damage from effluent, gray water, and other pollutants which will make their way into the Tucson basin, contaminating and despoiling sensitive riparian areas. The effects on rare and endangered bird and aquatic species cannot be overstated. Pumping will harm already-strained

water resources in the area, as ongoing drought has already stressed the wildlife in the area, such as black bears, deer, coatimundi and many others. The “health lodge”, pool, showers, bathrooms, and purposely vaguely worded “recreational areas” also put the general public at risk, as traffic in the area is already nearly untenable during the summer and tourist season.

The profit motive is obvious and unacceptable in this valuable and sensitive area. The Boy Scouts is the last group which should sponsor such a project, and the public relations scandal will be widespread. Hiding the profit motive with a “STEM” building is an obvious attempt to gain public support for this ill-conceived land grab.

Finally, I urge the Forest Service to carefully consider not only my voice as an educator, environmentalist, and wildlife rehabilitator with 25 years of experience on Mount Lemmon, but the many thousands of stakeholders who support my objection, pay taxes, and expect responsible use and protection of public lands. This poorly-researched project is not one of them.

Sincerely,

Saba Bennett

