



WORK AS PLAY

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Museum & Zoo Exhibit Design and Development
Radio Control and Special Effects Model Making
Insect & Reptile Wrangling, Nature Photography

Mr. Kerwin S. Dewberry

6.23.2021

Forest Supervisor and Review Officer

U.S. Forest Service

Objection: To current plan for the South Fork Day Use Area

300 West Congress Street

Tucson, AZ 85701

Dear Mr. Dewberry,

These comments are directed towards the use of a bathroom, handicap trail, picnic, and an information and perhaps presentation space in the area being reviewed for public use - South Fork Day Use Area. 36 CFR 218.8(d)

This note is to strongly object to the shrinking of the day use area and the relocation of the toilets, parking and tables. It should be returned to its original size.

1. This site is part of the **National** Forest which is for use by **all** when not under use for specific purposes such as logging, mining or grazing. It does not belong to a small number of mainly non resident special interest individuals or groups.
2. The few rare or endangered species of birds to be found nesting or living along the trails have all done so with the presence of hikers, naturalist, horseback riders, casual visitors and birders for at least the last 33 years that I have lived here within the borders of the National Forest. These non aggressive users have led to animals that are well adapted to the human presence. No deleterious effects have been recorded, unless you count fires and floods, in which the aforementioned groups were not involved.
3. The idea of creating an area which allows for some parking, the building of short trails accessible to handicapped individuals, a properly located toilet, maybe across the road, is a positive for all. The original proposed site will act as an educational preface to the area that can only have positive affects on those who visit. It is important to remember that not all will visit the visitor information center (many come from the Douglas area and have a tradition of coming to South Fork for family picnics and bypass the VIC as they don't see a need to stop there), and that the forest

guests learn in many ways. Some will learn by reading labels, some by seeing films but many learn by doing. Having a place to sit and draw, have a meal under the trees, take pictures, converse with the sounds of nature surrounding them, enjoy the walking trail and then, with new eyes, visit site appropriate interpretation opportunities. These are all important moments for expanding our visitors' understanding of the area. These are all ways to encourage guests to step beyond being just casual users of a place and instead become vested in the protection of our natural world.

4. The more spots we can do this in the National Forests the better we serve our visitors and encourage them to respect and love these important refuges for all - animals, plants, landscapes and people. After all who is it that we don't wish to come away with a different perspective on our natural world.
5. I have personally heard and read that some consider stopping the replacement of what we once had here would be an environmentalist victory and this should be done by any means possible. This includes demanding more reviews of alternative sites, elimination of handicapped paths, shrinking the services, asking for new data and endless reviews, and generally obfuscating the process. Anything to cause delays until this much needed element of South Fork goes away and nothing is done. I consider creating the area for visitor interaction to be a must and not doing it will be a loss for all our visiting communities.

Please don't give up the original plan or reduce to the point of ruin with this new plan. We need an area designed as it was originally dreamed of which helps in educating the forests visitors, parking, provides adequately spaced toilets and enhancing the area for storytelling. To do anything less will quickly resolve itself into an overused area that doesn't meet the needs of anyone.

Sincerely yours,


Raymond A. Mendez

Joy Comstock Mendez

In-holder resident of the forest of Cave Creek Canyon for over 30 years.

cc. Mr. Doug Ruppel, District Ranger