

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2023 1:28:26 PM
To: Dewberry, Kerwin - FS, AZ <kerwin.dewberry@usda.gov>
Cc: Martin, Michiko - FS, NM <michiko.martin@usda.gov>
Subject: [External Email]Chiricahua Public Access Project

[External Email]

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To: Kerwin Dewberry
Forest Supervisor - Coronado National Forest

Re: Chiricahua Public Access Project

Dear Mr. Newberry,

I live in Rodeo, New Mexico and like to go hiking and wildlife watching in the Chiricahua Mountains. I especially like the quietness and solitude to be found in John Long Canyon.

I find it hard to believe the Forest Service Environmental Assessment has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact for the Chiricahua Public Access Project, especially in regards to John Long Canyon. In my experience, whenever an area that had limited vehicular traffic is opened up to the public, significant environmental degradation occurs. You only have to look at areas in the Forest that are currently open to vehicles to see the evidence of such degradation – the so-called “Bluebird” dispersed camping spot up the road from the research station, for example.

Protecting the cultural and biological values of John Long Canyon far outweighs any benefit gained by providing more vehicular traffic into such a unique and sensitive area. The Chiricahua Mountains already have plenty of vehicular access to the Forest. Providing more vehicular access to this canyon does not benefit the public as a whole, especially if only people with four-wheel drive vehicles will be able to drive this road. Even though the Fish and Wildlife Service is providing the funding for this project, it would make more sense to spend the money maintaining existing roads that are in bad shape, which would provide more access to more Forest users.

In addition, it seems that opening up John Long Canyon to car camping would not only cause environmental degradation, it would also increase the chances for human caused wildfire. Since quiet recreation is an important goal for the Coronado NF, it would make more sense to not open this area to more motorized vehicles.

Greg Magee

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