

Kerwin Dewberry, Forest Supervisor
Coronado National Forest
300 W Congress St
Tucson, AZ 85701
Sent via email only: kerwin.dewberry@usda.gov
Re: The Chiricahua Public Access Project.

Dear Mr. Dewberry,

As residents of Cochise County, my husband and I are frequent visitors to the Chiricahua Mountains. Over the past 20 years, we have brought each of our grandchildren to camp and hike there. We always have priceless, beautiful experiences with them, including in and around Rucker Canyon. Therefore, we urge you to reconsider your proposal to build a road to access John Long Canyon.

First, we already have sufficient access. We drive to the rim of that canyon. It is enough. We do not need to drive down into its forested/fuel-packed center.

Second and perhaps most immediately important to our health and well-being, opening it up as you propose will mean increased numbers of vehicles in and around there. This is reckless. You would be creating additional fire risks to the public in what is already a potentially deadly tinderbox. Think about it: several miles of narrow canyon into mountains without natural egress. What happens when a vehicle's irresponsible smoker or hanging chain sparks the next fire at the mouth of or anywhere along that canyon, and that fire burns up canyon? It will trap and kill people. Mark these words.

Third, your proposal necessitates terrible cultural and biological loss. Today's public wants and needs what such rare and precious places provide, not more vehicle access, which lends itself to destroying them. And because one of your prominently stated goals in the Forest Plan is Quiet Recreation, we also question how this proposal's recreation is quiet. How?

Forth, most people do not have high clearance vehicles, so how would this kind of road actually assist that goal of public access, at least for the majority of people who use the forest? As the climate heats up, adding to the likelihood of devastating fires that threaten our forests and our lives, shouldn't the Forest Service encourage smaller, less fossil fuel burning vehicles? To that end, and if you are serious about access, why not upgrade poor roads in high-use areas to Management Level Three? Help the passenger car drivers in these areas, not the 4 wheel drive, high clearance drivers in the remote and deserving of more protection areas, which only increases potentially catastrophic fire risk to all areas!

Fifth and finally, please do not allow another agency's funding to drive something so reckless and harmful. Do not let it compromise the enjoyment of the larger public and our values, while providing access to a limited group of forest goers, not all of whom share our values.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Anne Carl



Cc: Deputy Forest Supervisor Kurt Davis (kurt.davis@usda.gov) and
Regional Forester Michiko Martin (michiko.martin@usda.gov)