

From: Peter A. Gierlach [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 25, 2023 9:35 AM
To: Dewberry, Kerwin - FS, AZ <kerwin.dewberry@usda.gov>
Cc: kurt.davis@usda.gov; Martin, Michiko - FS, NM <michiko.martin@usda.gov>
Subject: [External Email]proposed access road to John Long Canyon

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Kerwin Dewberry – Forest Supervisor
Coronado National Forest
300 W Congress St

Tucson, AZ 85701

Dear Mr. Dewberry,

My family and I left Tucson to live at the base of the west side of the Chiricahua Mountains almost thirty years ago to enjoy the rich diversity the area offers of plants, wildlife and cultural history. We have extensively explored the grasslands, canyons and mountains in our own backyard through picnicking, camping, hiking and hunting activities over the years and can't imagine a more wonderful place to live. My radio show, Growing Native with Petey Mesquitey on Tucson's KXCI reflects the extent of our meanderings and interest in the area.

We recently learned that the US forest service is proposing a road into John Long Canyon making it more accessible to the public. We are very concerned about this proposal for several reasons. For one, it seems to us that there are already plenty of roads to the area accessible with four wheel drive which is what we have always utilized to get to the rim of Long John. One can hike into the more wooded areas of the canyon from there.

Also, you are certainly aware of the number of Threatened or Endangered plant and animal species that inhabit the area that would be further jeopardized by increased human activity.

Another thing that is deeply concerning to my wife and me is the noise factor of making the more remote areas like Horseshoe Canyon and John Long Canyon more accessible by ORVs like the lately ubiquitous side-by-sides and other vehicles. In the last several years since we are both semi-retired we have devoted at least one day a week to getting into the hills and canyons around us for at least day trips. We use these days to look at plants, birds and wildlife; our form of "quiet recreation", regeneration and reaffirmation of our own place in nature. We have noticed though that the places we love are much less quiet since there are more and newer types of ORVs in them with us.

Finally, there is an increased safety factor in allowing increased human activity in such remote areas. We have personally weathered enough wildfires in our time in Cochise County to know how vulnerable we are to them, especially with worsening weather conditions. More people camping and driving in those areas would increase the likelihood of fires and it would be extremely difficult to rescue people trapped there by fires.

We hope we are not too late in expressing our concerns about the proposed road access to John Long Canyon and that you will take them into consideration as you decide whether or not to move forward with the proposal.

Respectfully,

Peter and Marian Gierlach

██████, AZ