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November 16, 2015

The Honorable Ben Ray Lujan
United States House of Representatives
2446 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-3103

Dear Representative Lujan:

The Edgewood Soil & Water Conservation District (Edgewood SWCD) has reviewed the information for the 2nd Phase Wilderness Inventory for the Mountainair and Sandia Ranger Districts. The Edgewood SWCD Board of Supervisors does not agree with creating additional wilderness within the Mountainair or Sandia Ranger Districts.

Edgewood SWCD has several concerns about additional wilderness. They are:

- 1.The three stand changing fires of 2008 validated the need for active forest management on the eastern slopes of the Manzano Mountains. The ability to implement treatments for watershed restoration would be obstructed by any additional wilderness areas. Lands that are identified as having wilderness potential should not be considered as special designation areas because this would create too large of an area which would be inaccessible for landscape scale restoration.
- 2.Livestock grazing continues in wilderness; but livestock management is more difficult due to limited access by motorized equipment
- 3.Edgewood SWCD is concern about the excess of accumulated fuels in the existing wilderness area. Wilderness area fires tend to crown out killing most of the trees and spreading fire into non-designated areas, resulting in catastrophic fires in areas where serious soil erosion occurs. This can cause damage downslope not only for forest land, but adjacent private land.

Sincerely,

David W. King, Chairman

cc: Elaine Korhman; Forest Supervisor, Cibola National Forest
Champe Green; Forest Planner, Cibola National Forest