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Comments: August 31st, 2016

Ms. Elaine Kohrman

Forest Supervisor Cibola

National Forest

2113 Osuna Road NE

Albuquerque, NM 87113

Dear Ms. Kohrman,

Please accept this comment letter from the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) regarding the Forest Plan Revision process for the Cibola National Forest. Two of our northern New Mexico chapters (Gallup Trails and Albuquerque Mountain Bike Association) also support the comments made in this letter. Specifically, this letter pertains to the Draft Plan Alternatives, and provides comment directly on several of those Alternatives. Upon attending a public meeting in Gallup, NM on July 25th, 2016; reviewing the associated documents, including Alternatives AE;

and gathering

information from local mountain bike advocates we have developed this comment letter to highlight our requests pertaining to mountain bike access. We do not currently have a preference for any one Alternative in its entirety and we understand that each of the Alternatives, (including Alternative B, the USFS Proposed Action) are subject to change via public comment, with the final drafts being released in early 2017. Instead of supporting any specific Alternative, we wish to offer suggestions on several of them as specific feedback on how components of these alternatives impact mountain biking interests. Please note that these comments are based only on Alternatives, AE, and

we are neutral on any component that we do not comment on.

Alternative B

Magdalena

Ranger District there

are currently mountain bike accessible routes

between the Apache Kid and Whitington Wilderness areas. We request that the recommended Wilderness parcel labelled D3_ADJ8 in the San Mateo Mountains should not extend as far north, as this would constrict eastwest mountain bike

passage between the existing Wilderness areas. Instead it should only extend as far north as the most northerly point of the existing Apache Kid Wilderness boundary. Parcel D3_ADJ8 also contains TR31, TR63, TR43, TR69 which should not be negatively impacted due to any additional management prescriptions.

Magdalena

Ranger District in

the Datil Mountains/Sawtooth area the

recommended Wilderness (parcels D3_5K10 & D3_5K11) should be removed from recommendation as IMBA has identified that this area offers significant opportunities for future mountain bike access and we seek to pursue this in the

future.

Alternative D

Sandia

Ranger District the

recommended Wilderness parcel (D5_ADJ9) to the

east of Albuquerque is of concern to us as it represents a restriction on recreational access close to an urban center. This parcel should be removed from recommended Wilderness consideration.

Alternative E

Magdalena

Ranger District we

do not feel that the recommended Wilderness

parcels north of the town of Magdalena (D3_5K7, D3_5K7.b & D3_5K7.d) are appropriate, as they could restrict mountain bike access in an area where economic benefits could be realized through increased tourism, such as mountain biking. These areas also offer the wild, backcountry experience that many mountain bike enthusiasts seek.

Magdalena

Ranger District similarly

the recommended Wilderness parcels

D3_5K10 & D3_5K11 in Datil Mountains could restrict mountain bike access in this area which could benefit from increased tourism. These areas also offer the wild, backcountry experience that many mountain bike enthusiasts seek and should be removed from Wilderness review.

Magdalena

Ranger District there

are currently mountain bike accessible routes

between the Apache Kid and Whitington Wilderness areas. We request that the recommended Wilderness parcel labelled D3_ADJ8 in the San Mateo Mountains should not extend as far north, as this would constrict eastwest mountain bike

passage between the existing Wilderness areas. Instead it should only extend as far north as the most northerly point of the existing Apache Kid Wilderness boundary. Parcel D3_ADJ8 also contains TR31, TR63, TR43, TR69 which should not be impacted due to any additional management prescriptions.

Magdalena

Ranger District parcel

D3_5K2 should be removed from further

analysis as it includes TR21, TR26 and TR8. TR8 is especially important as it is a connector to other trails including TR10 and TR25. Similarly, parcel D3_5K3 should be removed as it includes TR70, TR17, TR14 and TR15. The Langmuir Research Site is also in this area and includes many trails which are currently open to mountain bikes without any concern.

Magdalena

Ranger District (San Mateo Mountains) the
parcel labelled as

'Backcountry Wildlife Conservation Area' boasts extensive mountain bike trail access which should not be negatively impacted due to additional management prescriptions. We are currently unfamiliar with parcels D3_ADJ3.i, D3_ADJ3.d, D3_ADJ3.h, D3_ADJ3.f, D3_ADJ3.c, and hope to provide information on them during the next comment period.

Magdalena

Ranger District (San Mateo Mountains) for
parcel D3_ADJ7, the Big

Rosa Canyon trail (FR56 & TR36) runs along the boundary it shares with the
Withington wilderness. This is a popular trail, enabling a longer loop ride and
should remain open to mountain bike access.

Magdalena

Ranger District (San Mateo Mountains) parcel
D3_ADJ8 contains

TR31, TR63, TR43, TR69; parcels D3_ADJ8.c, D3_ADJ8.e, and D3_ADJ8.b,
contain many trails including TR68, TR45, Tr48, TR81, TR87 and should be
removed from any further Wilderness review.

Mountainair

Ranger District the

recommended Wilderness area labelled

D4_5K2 is of concern to us. Specifically there is an existing trailhead in the area
serving the public, including mountain bike access which should not be restricted
due to Wilderness Recommendation or future designation.

Sandia

Ranger District the

recommended Wilderness parcel (D5_ADJ9) east of

Albuquerque is of concern to us as it represents a restriction on recreational
access close to an urban center.

Sandia

Ranger District the

recommended Wilderness parcel to the north of

Albuquerque (D5_ADJ4) is of concern to us as it represents a restriction on
recreational access close to an urban center. This parcel should be removed
from further Wilderness consideration due to it's proximity to an urban center,
instead we request that the USFS develop mountain bike access in the area to
encourage public recreation.

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT)

The

CDT traverses the Mount Taylor Ranger District and it is our request that
none of the management prescriptions in any of the Alternatives (AE)
negatively

impact mountain bike access on that trail.

Additional comments

We

wish to learn more about the following designations: ' Critical Habitat', ' Draft
Management Area 2016' and 'Backcountry Wildlife Conservation Area' and we
will comment on any areas designated as such once the next round of
Alternatives has been released. It is our request that any areas with any of these
designations with trails currently open to mountain bike use, remain as such, and
that future mountain bike trail development is allowed under these designations.
Ms. Kohrman, we look forward to reviewing the Final Drafts of the five Alternatives and
we trust that our feedback will be incorporated into them. We wish to thank to Cibola
National Forest for their work on this process and in managing public lands for this and
future generations.

Sincerely,

Patrick Kell
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