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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Cibola Comment

Attached is a document with comments written by one of our producers that he would like to submit.

August 29, 2016

Cibola National Forest All Units
2113 Osuna Road, NE, Suite A,
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To Whom it may concern

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment during the Cibola National Forest Planning process. In regards to the Inventory and Evaluation Process of lands that may be suitable for Inclusion in the Wilderness Preservation System, I do have some issues and/or concerns. I am committed to working with you and your staff on this effort as it progresses forward and would like to submit the following comments:

1. When observing the map concerning Alternative B of the Magdalena Ranger District, the southern boundary of polygon D3 ADJ8.c does not follow the natural landscape. This boundary should be moved north to follow the natural landscape. If this change decreases the polygon size to <5000 acres, polygon D3 ADJ8.c should not be considered as wilderness because of the requirements used to propose new wilderness.

2. Increasing wilderness inventory is a detrimental factor for livestock producers with grazing allotments within the proposed boundaries. I understand that grazing continues in wilderness; however, difficulty of livestock management is increased.

3. My next concern is the excess of accumulated fuels in the existing wilderness area. Wilderness area fires tend to crown out killing most of the trees. This will result in soil erosion that flows into nearby streams degrading the ecological integrity of the water system and wildlife that utilize them.

4. Watershed restoration within a wilderness area will be nearly impossible due to the limitations of access that comes with wilderness designation. In addition, a number of the locations designated in the inventory would directly affect the ability of the Forest Service or other landowners or entities to manage properly for improved watershed health and would inhibit such work as water impoundment systems, erosion control and thinning projects.

5. There are a number of activities that occur within the current inventoried lands that are historic, cultural, research or provide economic benefit to the surrounding communities such as guided hunting, pinon nut gathering, well known rock climbing sites, and intermittent mining.

6. Three significantly noticeable watering tanks are located within proposed inventoried wilderness. They are located at the following locations:

a. 33° 40' 49.92" N 107° 22' 45.84" W

b.33° 42' 05.69" N 107° 21' 26.92" W

c.33° 42' 16.45" N 107° 33' 45.2" W

7. Under the "Guidelines" section on Pg. 125, it states "Improvements or facilities should not be constructed or provided.." Not allowing construction of improvements such as watering systems will force livestock and wildlife to travel farther distances for resources potentially resulting in unhealthy populations.

8. Under the "Guidelines" section on page 126, it describes the use of prescribed fires however management of prescribed burns in wilderness areas pose safety hazards to both forest service employees and residents living near wilderness.

9. Increase in wilderness inventory does not promote a healthy forest. Wilderness area composition includes old growth, closed canopy forest and this reduces understory growth of grasses and shrubs that are utilized by livestock and wildlife.

In conclusion, I am grateful to be able to participate in the planning process of the Cibola Forest Plan and hope that the comments provided will help to clarify the issues identified in this part of the process.

Thank You,

Randy Coil