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First name: Elizabeth

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Good Morning District Ranger Ruppel -

I am writing about the Scoping Letter for Chiricahua Public Access (Project 57856). Thank you for providing an opportunity for input.

I want to specifically address the proposed road around Dart Ranch that would provide vehicular access to John Long Canyon.

I am a frequent visitor to that beautiful, pristine canyon. I hike it at least 6 times a year from a variety of access points. It is filled with biodiversity and some endangered species and I am very concerned about disrupting this ecosystem with vehicles, more humans, human waste, and construction in general.

I would like to emphasize that contrary to your state project objective:

"Construct small sections of road to connect existing system roads to system roads that currently do not have public access due to intervening private land".

This canyon IS today, accessible to the public via 5 established, viable motorized roads that lead to trails:

From Rucker Road (FR74):

1. FR74E to FR 4243 (Rak) -1-mile hike directly to John Long

<http://www.chiricahuatrails.com/trails/rak-trail-267a>

2. FR74E to FR4244 to Trail 219 (Sycamore Canyon) to 219A - 2.1-mile hike directly to John Long.

<http://www.chiricahuatrails.com/trails/sycamore-cub-trail-219a>

3. FR74 to FR 4250 to FR360 (Dart Ranch) - .5-mile hike directly onto John Long Road

From Turkey Creek (FR41):

4. Trail 264 (Pole Bridge) - 2.5 mile hike directly into the top of John Long Road

<http://www.chiricahuatrails.com/trails/pole-bridge-trail-264>

5. FR4257 to FR334 to Trail 266 (Cottonwood) - 2.7-mile hike directly into the top of John Long Road

In my opinion (and in line with the forest service mission of advocating a conservation ethic in promoting the health, productivity, diversity, and beauty of forests and associated lands), five(5) access trails is enough for those who want to enjoy the canyon for what it is - a beautiful, wildlife filled area perfect for hunting, hiking and exploring. Vehicular access will bring campers, garbage, human waste, noise and have continuous impact on the canyon.

My concerns:

1. I am particularly concerned that the campgrounds along Rucker are being closed, due to lack of funds (per your email to me some time ago) to maintain them and put in adequate human waste disposal and yet the funds are available to cut new roads and create more areas that must be monitored and maintained? That makes no sense to me and in these times especially, fiscal responsibility is of the utmost importance.

2. I am also concerned about how much the existing road to Dart Ranch will be modified/improved. I understand the scoping document perimeters for the new road, but what is not clear is how much you will have to modify the current access just to get the equipment in. I imagine it will be extensive - and expensive.

3. I am wondering if the 360 beyond Dart Ranch will be changed/improved. As you know I am sure there is

deadfall across the trail that prohibits vehicular traffic regularly. This will be an ongoing cost for the forest service.

4. Will vehicles be allowed beyond the intersection of the 360 and 219A? There is a massive tree down across that area and much deadfall beyond that. In other words, how far will the 360 be opened?

General question regarding the proposal:

1. How much will each of these projects cost?
2. Where is the money coming from?
3. How will the areas be monitored for human encroachment?
4. Who is asking for this access?
5. Is the construction only in the areas highlighted or will the entire road be affected?

In closing, I would like to emphasize my request:

Please reconsider the vehicular access to John Long Canyon - it is not inaccessible by any means - as I noted above. This is a waste of money when the funds could be used to:

- \* Bring Cypress Campground back online
- \* Improve Camp Rucker and open it to more than group camping
- \* Improve the trails system and access roads mentioned above.

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment - protect our rare and endangered species from human encroachment PLEASE!

Sincerely,

Liz Taylor

I am attaching the Word version of this document for your convenience.