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Comments: Dear Forest Supervisor Travis Moseley,

Public concerns re: habitat connectivity and wildlife-vehicle accidents (WVAs) were brought up at the final public meeting last month and I would like to review them in these comments.

Please consider addressing some gaps in the Lincoln NF Draft Forest Plan/DEIS:

1. Aquatic species habitat quality and connectivity

Climate change impacts on the water temperature and suitability of riparian vegetation/biodiversity in Lincoln NF are not reviewed by area nor are specific solutions specified in the Draft. The total number of miles of impaired water ways is given, but little note of the causes of impairment or how to restore the water quality in the areas mentioned is given. Stream connectivity is highly impaired due to blocked culverts, uneven stream beds that reduce flow to isolated pools and vehicle crossings that disrupt and destroy habitat and add contaminants and sediment to the water.

2. Terrestrial species habitat quality and connectivity

The separation of the 3 districts of Lincoln NF make it even more difficult for wildlife - from deer and elk to slow moving meso species to make it from one forest area to another across a network of paved highways and unpaved forest roads without high mortality rates (see WVA map attachment). High OHV use and an increase on annual visitors has turned some areas into "uninhabitable" wildlife zones where human disturbance drives animals away due to lights, noise, movement and odor. From the standpoint of habitat preservation, the addition of the greatest possible number of WILDERNESS ACRES would be the most desirable approach to increasing ecosystem function for maintaining cleaner water, more diverse habitat and species, and removing forest treatments from remote and ineffectual wildfire risk reduction areas and focusing them on human infrastructure near access roads, campgrounds and other facilities.

3. Wildlife Vehicle Accidents

WVAs are extremely high on highways that access LNF (see map attachments and wildlife corridors). The intersecting travel areas around all 3 districts show anywhere from the 7th to the 5th highest accident rates in the state. While highways fall outside the scope of the Plan, cooperation with NM Department of Game and Fish and NM Department of Transportation was noted at the public meeting, and collaborative planning, funding and installation of safe highway crossings (flashing lights, pressure pads, speed bumps, signage) and safe underpasses are available to LNF to solve these high and dangerous collision rates.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. You are to be commended on the electronic version of the draft which allows easy access and a quick searchable content sidebar.