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First name: Wynne

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Kurt Davis, Deputy Forest Supervisor

Coronado National Forest

300 West Congress Street

Tucson, AZ 85701

Re: OBJECTION: Chiricahua Public Access Project

Dear Objection Reviewing Officer Davis:

I am writing in response to the Chiricahua Public Access Project (on the Coronado National Forest and its associated Environmental Assessment.

Although I now live in Tucson, my personal history in the Chiricahuas goes back to 1972 when I was a volunteer at the Southwestern Research Station and 1973 when I was the Assistant Director there. Later I owned 44 acres in Whitetail Canyon and Paradise for more than 30 years. I had horses for many years, and one of my favorite areas to ride was John Long Canyon, specifically because it was so undisturbed.

My horses are gone now, but I'm still a hiker, naturalist, and science writer, and I still visit often - particularly Rucker Canyon and the surrounding area, where the subject of one of my books (The Forgotten Botanist: Sara Plummer Lemmon's Life of Science and Art, University of Nebraska Press, 2021) created remarkable and exquisite scientific illustrations of the local plants in 1881.

Nearly 150 years later, it's still possible to find those plants, along with the peace and quiet experienced by Sara Lemmon in John Long Canyon - but not if the canyon is opened to ORV traffic. The additional motorized traffic and the wide camping corridor is all too likely to

- (a) bring in introduced invasive plants,
- (b) damage existing biotic communities,

- (c) reduce the habitat of sensitive species, including the jaguar, the Mexican spotted owl, and the Apache Goshawk.

But my biggest concern is fire ... the 2011 Horseshoe II fire burned my barn and 60 of my 64 acres in Whitetail Canyon. John Long Canyon is as densely wooded as Whitetail used to be and much narrower. The increased likelihood of fire from campfires and recreational shooting by ORV users is a potentially catastrophic danger to the public and firefighters alike.

The AZ G&F funds that have been designated for this project will only benefit a tiny percentage of users: ORV owners are 5 percent of Forest visitation and have plenty of other access in the Coronado. Please consider spending these funds on upgrading existing trails that will benefit the rest of us, hikers, birdwatchers, and equestrians, who savor this special biodiverse and unique area quietly - on foot.

Many thanks for the valuable work you do to protect our public lands!

Best,

Wynne Brown

