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Organization:

Title:

Comments: The following text was extracted from a scan of the original hard copy letter using Optical Character Recognition and pasted into this text box by Forest Service personnel. See attached scan (PDF) of original hard copy letter, Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form, photos, and documents.

KitK. South

29 KS Road Highway 605

Grants, NM 81021

Elaine Kohrman

Forest Supervisor

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Cibola National Forest & National Grasslands

2113 Osuna Rd. NE

Albuquerque, NM 87113

Dear Ms. Kohrman:

September 23, 2015

This letter is a formal acknowledgement and response to the USDA, Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Plan Revision, Inventory and Evaluation Process, Phase II Draft dated July 21, 2015. In accordance with the request and procedures set forth in the aforementioned document, I am protesting the Forest Service's inclusion of the approximately 5,378 acre inventory located at D2_5K2 in the Zuni Mountain Division, Mt. Taylor RD. As the current leasee of the USDA/Forest Service Prewitt/6A grazing permit, designated as D2_5K2 in the district plan revision, I would like to bring your attention to the fact that this land meets or exceeds a substantial portion of the exclusionary definitions listed in the Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form which should be taken into consideration before the committee proceeds into Phase III (see Attachment A). An adequate level of research and due diligence on the part of the Cibola National Forest & National Grasslands Steering Committee and Inventory Team would have discovered ample evidence from various, accessible sources detailing why this "land" is not fit for consideration within the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This evidence includes: substantial vegetation thinning and skid trails from logging activities; unnatural areas of forest appearance from logging and recreational activities; substantial departures from apparent naturalness of the area created by roads, unauthorized routes, fencing, range and wildlife improvements, and watershed treatments; impacts that are pervasive and would negatively influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude; and, limited to zero opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities because of unnatural limits from miles of fence (see Attachment A).

To date, efforts undertaken by the Steering Committee and Inventory Team members have only included low-resolution aerial surveillance and infrequent community meetings. Though I attended one of the meetings, the tone and resources provided were not conducive to discussion or to providing the required evidence for requesting exclusion of recommended "lands." Had the Committee and its appointed team taken initiative and included phone interviews with local Forest Service Rangers and the current, incumbent leasee, they could have quickly and easily collected anecdotal information and photographic evidence (see Attachment B) about the substantial developments widely distributed throughout D2_5K2 in the Zuni Mountain Division, Mt. Taylor RD. Additionally, obtaining a title of this land exhaustively detailing the numerous human impacts to the area is a relatively simple process and should be well within the means and scope of the Forest Service's research activities. I have taken the liberty to perform this task for the Steering Committee and the Inventory Team (see Attachment C).

Furthermore, the criteria established by the Steering Committee and the Inventory Team are heavily biased toward the recommended "lands" already being included in the NWPS, many of which are not and

should not be at this time. This approach ultimately requires the leasee to assume physical and financial burdens and responsibilities for collecting and providing evidence to exclude proposed, "recommended" lands from the NWPS and refute the limited aerial data collected by the Committee and its team.

In closing, if the Forest Service Steering Committee or the Inventory Team disputes any evidence provided in this correspondence, I would be happy to take members of the inventory team throughout D2_5K2 to validate evidence I've provided. I strongly recommend the Committee implement a more balanced and thorough approach to reviewing potential "lands" and is more diligent and detailed in securing evidence to nominate NWPS land inclusions. Taking these steps will ensure leasees are not significantly impacted and inconvenienced. Not doing so further erodes the trust taxpayers place in government departments such as yours.

Regards,

Kit K. South

KS Ranch Owner/Manager

Prewitt 6/ A Leasee