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Comments:

The following text was excerpted from the attached letter by FS personnel on behalf of the commenter.

we have consulted with several Forests on their Forest Plan revisions and have noted that every recent Forest Proposed Plan and DEIS has had Alternative B, ecological restoration, as the preferred alternative. We have stated that the consistency of the preferred alternative in each Forest's Proposed Plan and DEIS, reflects a continuing national management direction that de-emphasizes regional and Native American interests. And we have concluded that the Forest Service continues to make decisions consistent with national management preferences, for example ski and mining industry proponents, and continues to minimize and attempt to mitigate the adverse effects of such decisions on Native American Sacred Sites and Native American people.

we understood the 2012 Planning Rule identifies 15 ecological and sociological topic areas that are to be addressed during the revision process including "areas of tribal importance" and "cultural and historic resources and uses, native knowledge and ethics." In light of the Forest Service's Sacred Sites listening sessions, we stated we appreciate that cultural resources and Traditional Cultural Properties are identified as an area where there are priority needs in change for program direction. As the Sacred Sites report to the Secretary states, "... To disrespect the value of, Native American sacred sites would perpetrate the cycle of trauma." Therefore, we support improved heritage resources management as a priority need for change in program direction in the Plan revision.

Another recommendation we have made is that the Department of Agriculture and Forest Service incorporate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into its policies and procedures and commit to abide by its terms. Regarding locatable minerals subject to the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, "being outside the authority of national forest planning," in our November 14, 2011 letter to Secretary Vilsak regarding some of the Sacred Sites threatened by Forest Service, including Mt. Taylor, we supported the Direction/Policy Recommendations in the report, specifically Competing Statutory Obligations, 1. Explore changes to the 1872 mining law, "... to permit greater agency discretion when Sacred Sites may be impacted, and 2. Use mineral withdrawal authorities to proactively protect areas that include Sacred Sites.

Multiple uses based in 19th Century law are creating multiple use conflicts in the 21st Century. We consider the overall goal of managing National Forest System lands to sustain the multiple uses of its resources in perpetuity to be incompatible with the 21st Century, when increasing and conflicting uses further alienate Native people from our traditional lands and our uses of them.

Therefore, we reiterate that we believe the Forest Service must consider designated uses as a basis for future Forest management to address "areas of tribal importance" and "cultural and historic resources and uses, native knowledge and ethics." We recommend the Forest Service dedicate lands for protection in perpetuity, because multiple uses have been demonstrated to destroy our traditional cultural landscapes in perpetuity. And therefore, we support the identification of special management areas that could be designated for their unique or special features or characteristics.

The Hopi Cultural Preservation Office understands the current visual management system has been in place for nearly 30 years, and a more modern and accepted approach to evaluating aesthetics of

the land referred to as the scenery management system is being undertaken. We support a more modern and accepted approach to evaluating aesthetics of the land. However, we note the 1872 Mining Law is now one hundred forty two years old, and a more modern and accepted approach to evaluating aesthetics of the land cannot be fully undertaken while this archaic law continues to preempt any other Forest Service evaluation processes. \viii the scenery management system that designates the Mount Taylor Traditional Cultural Property as a high concern level be addressed in mining proposals pursuant to the 1872 Mining Law?