

**From:** [David Topping](#)  
**To:** [FS-objections-southwestern-regional-office](#)  
**Subject:** objecting to aspects of the MEDL final decision on the Coconino National Forest  
**Date:** Thursday, December 23, 2021 5:24:01 PM

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I am objecting to the decision for the MEDL project 38239 to construct single-use trails in areas on Mount Elden where no previous trails have existed. This project is in the Coconino National Forest, Flagstaff Ranger District where Matt McGrath, the District Ranger, is the Responsible Official. Given the high density of trails already in the MEDL project area and the impacts to this area by the Museum Fire, it is inappropriate to disrupt the remaining islands of wildlife habitat to construct such trails. In particular, it is inappropriate to construct single-use downhill mountain-biking trails in these undisturbed islands and thereby introduce mechanized recreation into these refugia for wildlife. Specifically, I am objecting to the construction of the Sunset Ridge Trail, New Reserves Trail, and the new hiking-only trail that will connect the summit of Mount Elden to the Old Heart Trail/Sandy Seep Social Trails. I have raised these concerns at multiple stages in this project but it seems like the entire point of this MEDL process is to give everything to the mountain bikers that FBO wants at the expense of the wildlife and off-trail wildlife watchers. The MEDL process HAS NOT been balanced from this hiker's perspective. New trails should closely align with the locations of historical social trails and not be built in relatively pristine areas. The decision letter makes it clear that the new single-use downhill mountain bike trails are to be constructed in these new areas because the Museum Fire destroyed some of the areas of heavy historical mountain-bike use, like the Wasabi Trail. I see no reason why the Museum Fire should be the excuse to permit further destruction of unaffected wildlife habitat to simply benefit one group, the mountain bikers.

Sincerely,  
David J. Topping

