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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Comments for Cibola

Dear Elaine Kohrman,

I am writing regarding the Cibola National Forest Plan. I have copied the plan submitted by the IMBA, below, which I am in agreement with. New Mexico is an amazing place for mountain biking and exploratory bike packing. I am a wilderness advocate, but admittedly many of the areas listed below are either already being used by mountain bikers, or have the potential for better bikepacking than backpacking. For example, the grand enchantment trail, as listed below in the Magdalena areas noted. Thanks for your consideration.

Alternative B

* Magdalena Ranger District - I request that the recommended Wilderness parcel labelled D3_ADJ8 in the San Mateo Mountains should not extend as far north, as this would constrict east-west mountain bike passage between the existing Wilderness areas. Instead it should only extend as far north as the most northerly point of the existing Apache Kid Wilderness boundary. Parcel D3_ADJ8 also contains TR31, TR63, TR43, TR69 which should not be impacted due to any additional management prescriptions.

* Magdalena Ranger District - in the Datil Mountains/Sawtooth area the recommended Wilderness (parcels D3_5K10 & D3_5K11) should be removed from recommendation as IMBA has identified that this area offers significant opportunities for future mountain bike access and we seek to pursue this in the future.

Alternative D

* Sandia Ranger District - the recommended Wilderness parcel (D5_ADJ9) to the east of Albuquerque is of concern to us as it represents a restriction on recreational access close to an urban center. This parcel should be removed from recommended Wilderness consideration.

This is a very very popular area for mountain biking, especially in the summer. These are well established mountain biking routes close to the road, and numerous options for hiker only trails exist in the nearby wilderness.

Alternative E

* Magdalena Ranger District - we do not feel that the recommended Wilderness parcels north of the town of Magdalena (D3_5K7, D3_5K7.b & D3_5K7.d) are appropriate, as they could restrict mountain bike access in an area where economic benefits could be realized through increased tourism, such as mountain biking. These areas also offer the wild, backcountry experience that many mountain bike enthusiasts seek. This is part of the grand enchantment trail, mentioned above.

* Magdalena Ranger District - similarly the recommended Wilderness parcels D3_5K10 & D3_5K11 in Datil Mountains could restrict mountain bike access in this area which could benefit from increased tourism. These areas also offer the wild, backcountry experience that many mountain bike enthusiasts seek and should be

removed from Wilderness review.

* Magdalena Ranger District - there are currently mountain bike accessible routes between the Apache Kid and Whittington Wilderness areas. I request that the recommended Wilderness parcel labelled D3_ADJ8 in the San Mateo Mountains should not extend as far north, as this would constrict east-west mountain bike passage between the existing Wilderness areas. Instead it should only extend as far north as the most northerly point of the existing Apache Kid Wilderness boundary. Parcel D3_ADJ8 also contains TR31, TR63, TR43, TR69 which should not be impacted due to any additional management prescriptions.

* Magdalena Ranger District - parcel D3_5K2 should be removed from further analysis as it includes TR21, TR26 and TR8. TR8 is especially important as it is a connector to other trails including TR10 and TR25. Similarly, parcel D3_5K3 should be removed as it includes TR70, TR17, TR14 and TR15. The Langmuir Research Site is also in this area and includes many trails which are currently open to mountain bikes without any concern.

* Magdalena Ranger District (San Mateo Mountains) - the parcel labelled as 'Backcountry Wildlife Conservation Area' boasts extensive mountain bike trail access which should not be negatively impacted due to additional management prescriptions. We are currently unfamiliar with parcels D3_ADJ3.i, D3_ADJ3.d, D3_ADJ3.h, D3_ADJ3.f, D3_ADJ3.c, and hope to provide information on them during the next comment period.

* Magdalena Ranger District (San Mateo Mountains) - for parcel D3_ADJ7, the Big Rosa Canyon trail (FR56 & TR36) runs along the boundary it shares with the Whittington wilderness. This is a popular trail, enabling a longer loop ride and should remain open to mountain bike access.

* Magdalena Ranger District (San Mateo Mountains) - parcel D3_ADJ8 contains TR31, TR63, TR43, TR69; parcels D3_ADJ8.c, D3_ADJ8.e, and D3_ADJ8.b, contain many trails including TR68, TR45, Tr48, TR81, TR87 and should be removed from any further Wilderness review.

* Mountainair Ranger District - the recommended Wilderness area labelled D4_5K2 is of concern to us. Specifically there is an existing trailhead in the area, serving the public, including mountain bike access which should not be restricted due to Wilderness Recommendation or future designation.

* Sandia Ranger District - the recommended Wilderness parcel (D5_ADJ9) east of Albuquerque is of concern to us as it represents a restriction on recreational access close to an urban center.

* Sandia Ranger District - the recommended Wilderness parcel to the north of Albuquerque (D5_ADJ4) is of concern to us as it represents a restriction on recreational access close to an urban center. This parcel should be removed from further Wilderness consideration due to it's proximity to an urban center, instead we request that USFS develop mountain bike access in the area to encourage public recreation.

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT)

* The CDT traverses the Mount Taylor Ranger District and it is our request that none of the management prescriptions in any of the Alternatives (A-E) negatively impact mountain bike access on that trail. The CTD Is already popular with mountain bikers and provides a unique high altitude experience.

Thank you,
Sarah Councill
Albuquerque, NM