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First name: John

Last name: Barthelme

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to make the following comments.

First , let me state that I first visited the Chiricahua Mountains in 1969 as a college undergraduate. I loved the area and especially South Fork for birding and hiking. I continued visiting the area over the next 50 years and fairly recently moved permanently to Sierra Vista to, among other reasons, be close to the Chiricahuas.

Who benefits from these proposed changes to South Fork ? Will it be the majority of residents of Portal ? Local ranchers and farmers in the valley ? A small number of business oriented residents of Portal ? Will it be the many specialized visitors- birders and hikers - that come to South Fork ? Perhaps the residents primarily from Douglas that also make regular weekend use of the nearby three campgrounds, Rustler Park and John Hands ? Is the Forest Service expecting a significant influx of visitors such that new facilities need building at South Fork ?

Cave Creek Canyon, and especially South Fork, is almost a " sacred place " to thousands of people, especially birders from across the USA, Europe and perhaps the world. It is THE place to hear and see Elegant Trogons in southeast Arizona. These birders and hikers too, realize how special South Fork is. That is why they tell their friends about the the beauty and remoteness of the canyon and continue return and return.

Cave Creek Canyon already has three nearby campgrounds (all of which already have bathrooms I believe... though I might be wrong here). The Canyon also has a terrific Visitor Center with a bathroom. For those wanting to learn more about the Canyon, there are displays featuring plants and wildlife, reading material is available, excellent photos of the Canyon as well. Why do we need educational kiosks in South Fork ? Please consider, if needed, a special display about South Fork at the Visitor Center instead of another kiosk at South Fork. Also consider the gift shop at the SWRS and their educational materials.

The Friends of Cave Creek Canyon (of which I am a member) support the proposed changes to South Fork. I disagree with their position most strenuously. For example, wheel chair accessibility. I find their argument totally unconvincing.... for two reasons. First, should all or most special animal/ plant areas in the Forest Service and National Parks areas be accessible to wheel chairs ? Imagine such a mandate for the South Rim of the Grand Canyon down to the river ? Yes, it would permit certain people access to the river but at what cost to the beauty and wildness of the canyon... not to mention the cost in \$. Second, on a personal note: my ex- wife was a guide and instructor in the Boundary Waters canoe location in Minnesota. She was an extraordinary outdoors person. Then she was diagnosed with MS and currently is in a wheelchair. Would she advocate wheel chair accessibility to the many lakes in the B Waters ? Most certainly no. She realizes, if I may speak for her, that certain areas are simply not possible to re- visit or visit anew. She accepts that and I would argue that South Fork is also such an area for people with similar disabilities. One can still venture out in Nature but not in all areas. South Fork , while this is tough to write, should be a location without wheel chair accessibility.

Two weeks ago I traveled to Cave Creek Canyon to see the proposed building changes to South Fork. It was hard to imagine the destruction by bulldozers that would install a bathroom, picnic areas, parking spaces, educational displays and more... the potential harm to plants and trees, Trogons and other birds.

If the Forest Service does decide to make some changes to South Fork, may I suggest the following :

- 1) put all structures behind the current gate.

2) put bathroom and parking area on the north side of the road. I think there is ALREADY room , with minimal construction, for their location including a car turn around.

3) put benches and picnic tables adjacent to parking area. No need for them to be spaced apart under the trees.

4) do minimal destruction to the existing area especially the floodplain of the creek.

Finally, I don't think South Fork needs this facility, Cave Creek Canyon doesn't need it , the Forest Service doesn't need it and the many visitors to South Fork and the plants and animals do not need it.

Respectfully

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