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Comments: The South Fork of Cave Creek is nationally renowned for its unique flora and fauna and its protection should be of paramount importance. Given the lack of alternatives in the Environmental Assessment, we support the No Action Alternative because of impacts to the Mexican spotted owl (MSO) and the Cave Creek Canyon Birds of Prey ZBA.

The Proposed Action will be within 100 feet of the Skull Rock MSO Protected Area Center (PAC). Creating a developed site with the associated traffic so close to a PAC and in a known area of MSO chick fledging would adversely impact MSO habitat in this area. Mexican spotted owls located in these drier locales, like the ones along South Fork Cave Creek, should receive extra protections because they may possess genetic adaptations necessary for the population to better adapt to climate change. The proposed action does not simply replace the parking at the end of 42E. The proposed action creates an additional developed area within the owl's critical habitat, along with the associated construction, structures, congestion and noise. This is because the gate will be left open much of the year and people will park at the end of the road, as they do now.

We urge the Forest Service to continue to use the existing parking area and avoid this additional development within the MSO's critical habitat and adjacent to a Protected Area Center.

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