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Comments: I support the proposed action, but with reservations about the need to close the road seasonally.

There was a picnic area in the heart of the Zoological Botanical Area (ZBA) for many years, and I never heard any one say it negatively affected the ZBA. The proposed picnic site is at the edge of the ZBA closest to FR 42, which should reduce impact on the rest of the ZBA. Some signage to educate visitors about the ZBA and what is special about South Fork will encourage respectful visitation. A handicapped trail will be especially welcome.

I understand that the picnic area placement will concentrate visitation at that site, and should reduce off-trail visitation and trampling in the rest of South Fork.

The site is immediately adjacent to a road that has been in use for at least 80 years, not exactly pristine habitat.

While this project will serve the needs of the thousands of visitors who come to South Fork (the most visited part of the Chiricahua Mountains), I do not anticipate there will be much increased usage. A bathroom and 3 picnic tables will be welcome to visitors, but not exactly what visitors would plan a trip around.

It would be good to hear the reasoning behind the idea of closing the road for several months. If the reasoning includes local species, it would also be good to see the data going back several decades. I haven't heard that the old picnic area affected any species nearby. If it didn't, they why assume the new one would?

If the reasoning to close the road includes dust and speeding, there are other ways (water bars, speed limits, dust inhibitors, etc.) that could be tried before a hard closure reduces access for those who cannot walk very far.

If it is the health of the forest that is at issue, then it would be good to let us understand that reasoning, also.

In summary, this is only a picnic area! It is nearly identical to what used to be a mile upstream.

The Forest Service has designed a good solution, weighing many factors. I thank them for that and for the opportunity to comment.