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Comments: I am generally in favor of Alternative B. Other commenters, such as Ray Mendez, make the case eloquently. My main concern is with the proposed closure. A 4-month closure will adversely affect visitors with limited mobility during the prime bird-watching season. A limited closure could be designed to allow access for these visitors. Could the wording of the EA be modified to allow a range of options, from a strict closure to a specified limited closure? Such a modification would give the USFS some flexibility to try different ways of achieving their objectives.

At one extreme of limited closure, I can justify a 6-week closure Friday-Monday each week. This would involve locking/unlocking the gate twice a week for a total of 12 times. USFS personnel could do this or the task could be delegated to the Friends of Cave Creek Canyon. The 6-week period would start mid-April, which coincides with the arrival of the Elegant Trogon and its numerous fans. By the end of May, the weather becomes less favorable and visitation subsides. Having the road closed over the weekend during this peak bird-watching season would greatly improve the experience and safety of those walking along the road, thus achieving the USFS objectives. In the middle of the week, Tuesday-Thursday, visitors with limited mobility could drive, or be driven, up to enjoy the canyon. Hikers could start at the berm and cut almost 2 miles off their hikes.

The appealing aspect of closing the road for only part of the week is that visitors can choose the nature of their canyon experience by choosing the day of the week for their visit. Those who seek a quieter, more contemplative walk can have it. Those who need or want vehicular access to the creek, the bridge, or the berm can have it.

Finally, I am not sure the DEA is clear about what vehicles are excluded during the periods when the road is closed. Are bicycles allowed? What about electric bikes? Golf carts? Motorized wheel-chairs? Electric carts?