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Last name: Fasimpaur

Organization:

Title:

Comments: November 22, 2020

Mr. Doug Ruppel
Douglas Ranger District
1192 West Saddlevue Road
Douglas, AZ 85607

Dear Mr. Ruppel:

These comments are submitted with regard to Chiricahua Public Access #57856 and in particular the Horseshoe Canyon portion of this proposed project.

I am writing as a local landowner and a person who enjoys camping and hiking in Horseshoe Canyon.

I object to the proposed plan for Horseshoe Canyon and respectfully request that in lieu of the proposed road construction, one of two other courses of action be considered. First, I would suggest that no action be taken since there is no immediate access issue in this location. A second alternative would be to purchase an easement for the existing Horseshoe Canyon Road access, which is likely to be much less expensive than the proposed road construction. This could be done now or postponed until it becomes necessary.

The primary objective I have to the proposed project in Horseshoe Canyon is that it will not increase access to the forest in any way. There is currently no problem with public access to the canyon. Recreational users, hunters, cattle runners, law enforcement, and others all currently have and make use of motorized access to Horseshoe Canyon. This has been the case for many years, and it is not apparent that this is likely to be a problem in the foreseeable future. Given that and the existence of an alternative Arizona Game and Fish Department owned easement connecting Sunrise Road to the National Forest boundary, it is suggested that the proposed construction not be done at this time. In the event that public access is curtailed in the future, this can be reconsidered. In the meantime, funds are better spent on areas that already lack public access.

The additional reasons that I oppose the immediate construction of a new road are concerns about drainage and the effect on nearby public roads, the potential environmental impact, and the possibility of an ATV loop being created.

First, Sunrise Road has had serious drainage problems, as do other roads, like Zent/Horseshoe Canyon, that run east-west down from the Chiricahuas. With monsoon flooding, these roads have had damage that has made them hard to drive without 4 wheel drive. This condition has worsened since the Horseshoe II fire and flooding from Hurricane Odile. Sunrise Road is not maintained by the county or the USFS, leaving it to local residents to do any repair work that is required. If the contemplated new road is constructed, there will be a more direct east-west channel for water sheeting off the mountains to flood Sunrise Road and cause damage.

I am also concerned with the potential environmental impact to flora and fauna that may be caused by this construction. This area is a pristine wilderness with unique biodiversity that we are keen to preserve.

Finally, with the proposed road construction, there would be a loop from Sunrise into the forest created by the connection of this road with the already existing Sunrise-Horseshoe Canyon Roads. There are already a number

of ATVs that go into the canyon, and it is a concern that this loop could increase their numbers and further damage the environment.

In addition, as a landowner in this area, I would like to request a public meeting to discuss the issues. No outreach has been done on this here, and many residents are unaware of this proposal and have questions that deserve to be addressed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Fasimpaur