

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/23/2020 5:29:02 PM

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Comments: 22 Nov 2020

Dear Forest Service,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Chiricahua Public Access E.A.

I oppose opening ANY new roads in the Chiricahua Mountains. Your proposed road into John Long Canyon is especially egregious, and it's a proposal that has been shot down in the past, for reasons which haven't changed, and which are still valid. Road development will degrade what is now an area of great beauty, tranquility, and high natural values.

The Travel Management Plan, finalized in 2017 after considerable public impact, dealt with road issues such as those proposed here, and I doubt that you can legally subvert those decisions based on the flawed EA you present here--an EA which ignores critical factors and doesn't detail the probable impacts to the 40 sensitive species involved.

My reasons for opposing new roads here are related to the high biological diversity and value of the Chiricahuas. Roads degrade habitat. Period.

It's my understanding that these new roads (including the opening of one decommissioned route) are proposed to benefit ATV users, and particularly hunters who use ATVs. In the past, more traditional hunters who do not use ATVs joined the opposition to the Forest Service's opening a road into John Long Canyon. In fact, an AGFD survey of thousands of people who had failed to renew their hunting permits, revealed that the majority (62%) no longer hunted because of the prevalence of ATVs.

ATVs drive out many other kinds of users as well--anyone seeking peaceful hiking and nature observation. The segment of the public using ATVs is tiny compared with other kinds of users: 5% is the figure I've seen. Do NOT degrade the Chiricahuas to further ATV usage. It makes no sense at all to damage the only roadless canyon in the Chiricahuas in order to encourage more ATVs to invade the area.

In addition, public access by road into Horseshoe Canyon already exists.

I cannot understand how you are willing to undertake the building of new roads with taxpayer money, when such a tiny segment of the public would benefit, and when you are telling us that you don't have the funds to service and maintain the developed areas you already have.

Please do not further degrade our treasured mountains. This proposal stands on very shaky ground, and would likely be contested.

Narca Moore-Craig
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