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Title:

Comments: Leroy Cockrell, Little Bear Forest Reform Coalition, Submitted on November 5, 2021 at 1:45 PM MST, landcockrell@yahoo.com Forwarding comment. Diane, I had a good visit with David the other day and he was able to clarify and answer my questions. Find attached subject item. Thanks for all you do, Our LBFRC wants to thank all the many Lincoln National Forest personnel involved with the continuing efforts the last six years to update the Forest Plan. It looks like we're getting down in the short rows now and we all look forward to seeing the finished product published. The recent Zoom video conferences were enlightening, especially the Forest Service presentations of the draft plan. The question-and-answer portions were less than impressive or useful in my opinion as it required the audience member to type out our questions which can be very time consuming and cumbersome for those of us that might have had several questions or comments. The vocal comments and statements at the end of the session however were informative and could have been longer. The LBFRC understands that it is the intent of LNF management to undertake Alternative B of the plan with only minor modifications or corrections being made. Any effort to move toward Alternative C would be met with considerable protest from the LBFRC Board, its membership and we believe the public at large in Lincoln County. Any effort to move towards Alternative E would be applauded. The LBFRC would like to bring to your attention specific matters that are important to us and most of our membership. I will list these matters without prioritization being indicated. Our area of concern is primarily Lincoln County and the Mescalero Reservation. - The LBFRC continues to stand with those in our community that are opposed to any further Wilderness designations being assigned. - The LBFRC continues to support all Fire Preventative Treatments that can be applied to the Lincoln National Forest. - The LBFRC continues to support any Watershed improvement measures that might be enacted on the Lincoln National Forest. Aside from these support functions within the Lincoln NF, our objections to this forest plan and its course of action, being that of Alternative B, center mostly around Wilderness, Access to Wilderness and Forest Management Issues such as: - Wilderness designations disallows encroachment and creates high-density timber populations which can propagate catastrophic wildfires in the Wildland Urban Interface that is nearer to multiple private properties and higher population densities. - Wilderness designations yield the inability to undertake thinning projects, especially near residential areas - A wilderness designation will further restrict the ability to make watershed improvements in the area. These activities consist of but are not limited to topographical modifications of the land mass such as construction of berms and swales or terraces, addition of vegetative and stone barriers, specific forest thinning to enhance charging of the aquifer and other valid measures to improve the forest and watershed's resiliency in the area. - The Forest Service has limited ability to begin fire suppression efforts on Wilderness lands - Wilderness designations inhibit efficient game retrieval by hunters and outfitters in high use areas. - A wilderness designation will restrict recreational activities for senior and handicapped citizens in the area from having access to the area using off-highway and all-terrain vehicles - The wilderness designation will further restrict popular recreational geocaching activities in the area - The wilderness designation would further restrict present and future access to mineral and other natural resource needs in the specified area. There is considerable concern with designated Wilderness polygons SBD18, 21 and 23 that are generally located on the East side of the White Mountain Wilderness area. Mapping presented with the plan makes it very hard to discern whether this will have an impact on the public's ability to traverse the entire Nogal Bonito Lake Loop (NBLL) which uses FS400 (Nogal Canyon Road), FS108, and FS107 (Bonito Lake Road). Any of these mentioned above or elsewhere in the Smokey Bear District polygons that will sever access to any Forest Service roads, trails or trailheads is not an acceptable course of action for the FS to authorize. Some of the designated polygons along the western side of the White Mountain Wilderness do exactly that. All roads, trails and loops must be left open even where they border designated Wilderness Areas. We cannot emphasize these points enough. There is also some concern with the designated Wilderness areas shown in color (purple) on page 200 of the August 2021 Lincoln National Forest Draft Land Management Plan. For example, the entire west side and most of the northwest side (SBD6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 10, and 13) of the Capitan Wilderness area is shown to become designated Wilderness when the zoom feature is utilized on that map. This

may be a printing anomaly but should be clarified. Again, the LBFRC would like to thank the entire staff of the LNF for all the work that they do. It is a monumental task that is not easily done, and the Little Bear Forest Reform Coalition has enjoyed many partner and stake holder roles in the past 9 years. We look forward to many more ways in the future to partner with the FS and appreciate very much our opportunities to share our thoughts and goals with you.