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Title:

Comments: I appreciated you coming to the LNF Allotment Owners Association meeting recently and for addressing numerous topics of concern for our members. One of the topics was proposed recommendations for wilderness designation under different alternatives. Tony Lewis, gave a presentation regarding why the areas on his ranch under one of the alternatives do not qualify for this designation and should be removed for consideration. He mentioned that if there is a recommendation for any alternative, it should be addressed. There are two areas that are on our ranch; and although they are found in Alternative C, they too should be removed for consideration for the following reasons: SRD 56[mdash]Perk and Hughes Canyons to Agua Chiquita, 5249 acres. The acreage is too close to the minimum of 5000 acres to even be considered as a wilderness area. It also projects into an area that is surrounded by forest that is not even being considered; therefore, it would be an isolated small island. Logging has occurred in its upper part to promote a healthier forest, and logging needs to continue in the future to address forest overgrowth and reduce the probability of wildfire. A wilderness designation would halt logging and promote overgrowth which would produce good conditions for wildfires that would spread to surrounding areas in the forest. This area contains numerous old homesteads and quite a bit of private property on the perimeter that show man's imprint quite easily, and more fences are currently being constructed. Furthermore, should a wildfire escape the wilderness, there would be a high probability of burning the private property. It is unconscionable to allow the forest to burn private land and the infrastructure on it. The allotment owners have constructed and must maintain fencing, holding traps, dirt tanks, trick tanks, metal drinkers, pipelines, drinking troughs, etc. Maintenance requires the use of machinery and other heavy equipment that would not be allowed in a wilderness. It is imperative that the fenceline between allotments and our pastures be accessible since our A01 mandates that the fenceline be maintained. The area would be unmanageable due to heavy ATV usage all over the canyons and especially during hunting season. There are no inventoried roadless areas here. The trails up side canyons are well traveled to meadows that are popular with numerous hunters. Designated critical habitat for the NM Meadow Jumping Mouse is contained in or adjacent to this area. However, the designated area does not contain the required constituent elements for the majority of the area. The Agua Chiquita road is on one side and is heavily traveled by vehicles along with glamping, RV camping, and ATV usage. This recreation usage extends throughout the area. Also, a road in the center used to be labeled as a wood cutting area. This type of usage should be continued in appropriate wooded areas. The invasive love grass and musk thistle are found extensively here. Spraying needs to be done for control of these invasive species, and commercial control requires equipment usage. The ranking is for very low high (7.9), and it would not be suitable as a wilderness area due to the above reasons. SRD 63[mdash]Long Canyon to Monument Rim and Agua Chiquita and Jim Lewis Canyon Roads extending then to Southern Monument and Chilcoot Road, 11,453 acres. The well-used Monument Canyon Road essentially cuts the area in half and is well used. The road requires equipment maintenance from time to time, and we have done some of it. The Board Canyon Road to Jim Lewis Canyon was closed by the forest service, but it still exists and is more open and usable by ATVs now that the area has had the mastication treatment which cleaned up a lot of the dead, downed trees and helped to restore forest health and the watershed. Continued mastication would help to improve forest health in this area. The road from Rogers to Monument has recently been closed due to erosion by excessive ATV usage, but the public still uses it and additionally follow other trails with their motorized vehicles. Also, the road from Agua Chiquita Road to Rogers Field is heavily used, and the traffic continues into the area in several directions from there. Numerous old logging roads and trails have been closed by the forest, but they are still used by motorized vehicles. Solitude is not as available as may initially be considered. Therefore, extensive camping and glamping along with ATV usage is found in the area especially because of the easy access roads (Agua Chiquita, Monument Road, Board Canyon, Long Canyon, and Bluewater Canyon). Hunters use the area heavily. The area contains manmade dirt tanks, railroad grades, and old homesteads (Smith cabin, Courtney Cabin, Johannsen, George Lewis, Reynolds, Spiller, Schultz, Atkins, and Jim Lewis to name a few that we know) which show the human imprint. The Carissa Lookout is contained in the area, and it is above the tree line. The invasive musk thistle is found extensively in the

area, and commercial treatment requires the use of motorized equipment. Critical habitat for the New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse is designated even though there has only been one reported as found, and the area does not have the required constituent elements for the designation. The allotment owners have constructed and must maintain fencing, holding traps, pipelines, dirt tanks, etc. Maintenance for these often requires equipment usage. It is especially important for us to maintain the fenceline between our pastures since it is mandated in our A01. The Circle Cross fire of 1953 continues to leave a large scar in the area which is becoming overgrown with oak brush and small trees. This overgrowth needs to be controlled, and the fire scar has brought in the undesirable locust vegetation and oak thickets. Our private land (base property) and access road to the rest of the Agua Chiquita Allotment are on the southern side, and that access road must stay open for our usage. (We also maintain it as needed which may require heavy equipment.) Some logging has been done on the southern side of the area, and logging is essential to continued work toward restoring forest health. The wildland-urban interface with Timberon does not lend itself well to a wilderness recommendation. The mouth of Long Canyon becomes a village of campers all summer and fall every year. The overall score rating of 8.3 shows that the raters do not know the area well; and with further consideration, the rating should be lowered because of the above reasons. Please reevaluate the parcels SRD 56 and SRD 63 because the forest is already managed adequately by the forest service, and forest service personnel need the ability to properly manage this high elevation desert forest without restrictions imposed by a wilderness recommendation that could lead to a designation. Please remove parcels SRD 56 and SRD 63 from wilderness recommendation in all Alternatives, and I thank you for considering this change for the Forest Plan Revision.