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First name: William

Last name: Mitchel

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Dear Sir:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Coyote Flat OHV Recreation Enhancement Project.

I wish to point out that my comments are the result of considerable familiarity with the Coyote landscape through years of hiking on the Coyote Ridge including Lookout Mountain and the Grunion Plateau southwest of the main Coyote Plateau. These comments are also based on my experience as a member of the Collaborative Alternative Team (CAT) which evaluated each route, system and non-system, and developed recommendations for a route system that met certain criteria (basically minimum needed system).

I will limit the comments to just a few, those proposals that I believe to be the most important.

#### 1. Green Lake Overlook road

I don't see anything in this proposal that is more important than decommissioning this route. It is a user created route, not one created by the Forest Service for a specific purpose or by miners years ago. A review of historical topography maps will lead to that conclusion.

Over time the road was user created and went over a saddle and down onto Grunion Plateau.

Part of the road is already illegal. The compromise made from my proposal during the CAT deliberations was to truncate the road at the saddle so that people could walk down to the overlook and there would be less temptation to ride OHVs across the fragile landscape. The barrier for the saddle was put in the wrong place (very close to the Overlook), then ripped out and never replaced. But, vehicle drivers continued to use the road as if it was legal.

Over time OHVs, trucks and dirt bikes have had free run, tracks in the tundra are visible as are dirt bike tracks which have now gone into the wilderness to the south.

This road is shown on the map of proposals in yellow. Anything less than removing the entire yellow section will result in another illegal route which would be in conflict with the objectives of designating the route system.

The proposal also includes possible replacement or rerouting but that would be self defeating and accomplish nothing. Given that this is in a roadless area, that part of the proposal should not go forward.

#### 2. Salty Peterson Mine and UN2194 System Additions

UN2194 was not included in the route system when the system was established. The Collaborative Alternative Team reviewed it and decided against it. There was a lot of knowledge among the team members which included representatives from the motorized community and the decision was to not include it.

It is redundant. It doesn't open access to anywhere that isn't already accessible through the current route system other than open alpine terrain on Lookout.

Again, it is in a roadless area.

It is close enough to Lookout Mountain to be tempting for dirt bikers to create a connection to the road on the ridge west of Lookout Mountain. That would be very destructive. Part of that connection is already established at the upper end where OHV users have created a route eastward from the road on the ridge to where it is possible to look down on UN2194. You should expect that it won't take long for it to happen.

The Salty Peterson Mine is at the intersection of UN2194 and 8S18, therefore the proposed addition is not necessary for access to the mine.

Adding a new road the length of UN2194 degrades territory for wildlife. Human impacts have been proven to have a detrimental effect on wildlife reproduction.

Again, it is in a roadless area.

If the proposed addition of UN2194 is to compensate for the loss of the Green Lake Overlook route, that as a reason should not stand. Each individual part of the proposed project should stand on its own merits.

Finally, the Forest Service should expect and be prepared for the Plateau to be swamped with OHV riders if access to the Plateau is made easier by reconstructing the access road and especially if the connection to the Baker Creek route is improved.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment,

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P.S. I would attach photos of the dirt bike tracks in the wilderness area south of Grunion Plateau but I have been traveling and do not have access to my photos which are stored at home.  
Attached is a copy of my statement above.

Sent from my iPad