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Comments: As a 20-year volunteer and user of the Arizona Trail, I would like to thank the USFS personnel for preparing this Comprehensive Plan for the Arizona National Scenic Trail. This is an excellent draft.

The Arizona Trail provided unique opportunities for people from across the country, and the world, to experience the unique landscape, geography, fauna, and flora of Arizona. From the breathtaking majesty of the Grand Canyon to the bloom of a Saguaro Cactus, there are so many unique and often fragile aspects of this incredible state that need to be preserved for current and future generations.

My first association with the AZT was as a volunteer near Tucson. My time as a volunteer on the trail has led to many of my closest friendships and to my hiking the entire trail over 20 months with one of those friends. This is an accomplishment of which I am still amazed that will be with me for the rest of my life.

Another important aspect for me comes from my time as a Trail Angel on the AZT. This activity introduces me to trail users from around the world and allows me to see the trail through their eyes and with so many different life experiences and perspectives.

With that in mind, I do have a few comments to share about the proposed Comprehensive Plan:

*I am very pleased with the inclusiveness of this plan in that you are treating the communities currently involved with the trail as important partners moving forward. In this regard, I specifically appreciate the importance of the Arizona Trail Association and the various Indigenous tribes that are mentioned.

*As someone who spends a lot of time on the trail, I also want to prioritize the importance of protecting the full planning corridor. The scenic vistas a mile away from the tread are just as important as the tread itself. Additionally, all of the trail values outlined in the draft are extremely important to protect as the experience that is the AZT is more than the scenery; it is the cumulative experience of the scenery, terrain, history, wildlife, wilderness, ruggedness, etc. that cumulatively make for this unique experience.

*In order to protect this entire corridor in perpetuity, I want to support the acquisition of State Trust Lands along or near the planning corridor.

*In the discussion of Connecting and Side Trails, there are a number of trails that, while not currently official connecting or side trails, are important trails and should be mentioned for possible future consideration as formal connecting trails. Included would be:

- oWilderness bypass in the Catalina mountains

- oLost Trail in Superior

- oAccess trails from designated trailheads to the actual trail. An example of this would be the recently completed ½ mile trail from the Casa Blanca Canyon Trailhead.

*I would also like to support the importance of what you have already stated regarding Dark Sky Resources.

These are very important resources not always appreciated by those that have not experienced them.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important Comprehensive Plan.