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First name: R. Michael

Last name: Gerlach

Organization: Montlure Presbyterian Properties, Inc

Title: Vice President

Comments: Montlure is a non-profit organization established in 1926. In 1930, Montlure entered into what is now referred to a Special Use Permit with the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest to conduct our mission on 13 acres of land near Greer, AZ. Since that time, we have hosted youth activities at the Greer site continuously until 2011 with the exception of 4 years during WWII. In 2011, the Wallow Fire burned more than 500,000 acres of land including areas around Greer and the property Montlure manages. Five structures were completely destroyed during the fire. With the loss of the tree canopy and ground cover, storm events in the watershed resulted in erosion damage on the site. Our permit was placed under suspension until natural processes could take place. Since 2011, Montlure has continued to maintain our facilities (cabins, trails, and utilities). We have also continued to conduct our mission by renting other campgrounds. As with all other facets of life, the cost for renting other facilities has skyrocketed over the last several years. Since 2011, we have lost the strong sense of tradition for conducting our program in Greer. Our program brings people to the Greer area supporting the local economy. We provide a valuable social/recreational service by providing a safe and nurturing place for ALL youth (regardless of race, gender, physical ability, social standing) to interact with nature, the environment, and each other. Our program teaches respect for ALL these facets of life and is in harmony with the purpose and function of the United States Forest Service. We have 95 years of experience working in partnership with the United States Forest Service to provide a safe, sustainable (economically and environmentally) program that benefits the young people in Arizona and beyond as well as the community of Greer. Approving the proposed actions under review for the establishment of a new Special Use Permit is absolutely vital to the continued operation of the mission Montlure provides.