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First name: Rodin
Last name: Molina
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Helicopter Use in the Pusch Ridge Wilderness NEPA

July 31, 2014

Shalonda Guy
Deputy District Ranger
Coronado National Forest
5700 N. Sabino Canyon Road
Tucson, AZ 85750

comments-southwestern-coronado@fs.fed.us

RE: Comments in response to EA for Authorizing Helicopter Use by the Arizona Game and Fish Department within Pusch Ridge Wilderness

Dear Ms. Guy,

Please include this letter as my comments for the official record of the Draft Environmental Assessment that proposes Authorizing Helicopter Use by the Arizona Game and Fish Department within Pusch Ridge Wilderness.

I am a regular visitor to the Pusch Ridge Wilderness in the Santa Catalina Ranger District of the Coronado National Forest. I live in Tucson, where my family owns a home, and we also own land in rural Pima County. We plan to live in this area for the long term, and the Pusch Ridge Wilderness is an area that is very special to us. We plan to continue hiking in this area for years to come.

Part of the importance of the Pusch Ridge Wilderness to me is its wild, unspoiled character. I derive great recreational, aesthetic and spiritual value from maintaining the wilderness in a state with minimal human interference.

The use of helicopters for the bighorn sheep reintroduction project concerns me because I know that the overflights and helicopter landings will negatively impact my wilderness experience. I am also concerned that I will not derive as much enjoyment from the wilderness knowing that the bighorn sheep living there are all collared and are regularly harassed, trapped and otherwise intensively managed.

I also support the comments submitted by Friends of Wild Animals, the Sierra Club, and Wilderness Watch. I have serious objections to the entire Catalina bighorn sheep reintroduction program, and am concerned that approving helicopter landings would exacerbate that program's already substantial impacts on wilderness and wildlife.

The Draft EA does not provide sufficient documentation to allow a Finding of No Significant Impact and therefore the project should be rejected or an Environmental Impact Statement prepared.

Sincerely,
Rodin Molina
PO Box 1302
Tucson, AZ 85702