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Comments: This letter is in reference to proposed re-definition of wilderness boundaries on the West Side of the Sandias.

The North Foothills trail system around Elena Gallegos should NOT be designated as wilderness area. The area is completely unsuitable as wilderness by the definition of the Wilderness Act itself. The Wilderness act was created "to establish a National Wilderness Preservation System for the permanent good of the whole people, and for other purposes." What is the "whole people?" Does that include mountain bikers? Mountain bikers have few places they can ride to enjoy the beauty and specter of the Sandias. The North Foothills trail system is one of those, and it is very convenient and attractive to ABQ citizens such as myself who ride our bicycles to the trails, cutting down on motorized traffic to trail heads. There is no benefit to the "whole people" to designate this area as wilderness. Mountain bikers, who have enjoyed and peacefully shared this trail system with hikers, joggers, and horseback riders for decades, would be completely marginalized and excluded from the area. By the way, this would also put a significant dent in your revenue from parking in the area from those cyclists who do drive to the area. This is not beneficial to anyone. It encourages animosity towards the USFS and distrust of our local leaders and ignores the needs and wants of a large group of people. This is not beneficial to the whole people by any means. It is already a heavily used multi use area.

Furthermore, again according to the Wilderness Act, "wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man." The North Foothills trail system is not what I would call "untrammelled by man." There are so many trails and loops that they can be seen from the top of Sandia Peak. It is a huge trail system with thousands of people using it every weekend. I can't ride on a trail in the area without encountering at least a dozen people in less than two hours. A land to be designated for wilderness should be, by the wilderness act definitions, far removed from man and his influence. The North Foothills trail system is anything but far removed from man.

By the Wilderness Act, land designated for wilderness "1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation..."

The North Foothills trail system literally passes so close to folk's backyards in some cases, you can smell what they are having for dinner. This is not solitude. This is a multi-use area! It is already obvious that man has affected the landscape of the area in large ways, especially considering the massive network of trails and amount of activity in the area. This is not an area which is far removed from civilization and offers great solitude and respite from humanity. There are many areas like this in the Sandias, and they are already designated as wilderness. The North Foothills is adjacent to a metropolis, and is used, quite successfully and cooperatively, as a multi use recreational area, which is hugely important to the population of the area.

I strongly urge you all, please do not designate this area as wilderness and leave it open to mountain bikers and others who want it to be multi-use. To do otherwise goes against the very core of the wilderness act which is "for the good of the whole people." To designate the North Foothills as wilderness now, is to take ten steps backward in the progress of Albuquerque and New Mexico's wonderful recreational system.

Thank you for your consideration.