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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Wilderness Reclassification

To the USFS Forest Planner,

I would like to express my concern about the Bear and Magdalena Mountains Phase 2 Inventory Map and the areas marked for possible reclassification as wilderness. I support the concept of wilderness, but find it lacking in practice due to the prohibition of "mechanized" travel, which includes bicycles.

The Magdalena Mountains are the closest mountains to Socorro, and therefore regularly used by local riders. They offer unique scenery and challenge, as well as a respite from the heat of the valley in the summer months.

Mountain biking was my introduction to the undeveloped areas of New Mexico. My bicycle allowed me to explore more of New Mexico's wild areas than I would have ever been able to on foot and with much less impact than a passenger car/pickup, or in my opinion even on foot. The distances I was able to cover on a bike meant I could explore an area in a day, without having to set up camp, build a fire, etc.

Working with the USFS and other local riders, I have also performed trail maintenance in the past, most recently on Copper Canyon Trail 10.

Popular trails used by local cyclists that are in areas designated for wilderness consideration include:

- Mesa Trail (Tr. 13)
- Copper Canyon (Tr. 10)
- South Baldy (Tr. 11)
- North Baldy (Tr. 8)
- Hop Canyon (Tr. 25, 25A)
- Sawmill West and East Forks (Tr 19, 93)
- Six Mile Canyon (Tr. 14)

local riders have also performed trail maintenance in the past in the area, in particular on Bear Canyon and Chimney Canyon Trails (TR64, 65).

Popular trails used by local cyclists that would be closed to us include:

- Big Rosa Canyon to Rosedale Loop (TR36 and 92)
- Bear Canyon / Chimney Canyon (Trails 64, 65)
- East Red Canyon (Tr. 31), Allen Spring Canyon, and Indian Creek (Tr. 43)
- Big Pigeon Canyon and White Water Canyon Loop

Trails used by local cyclists are partially documented on this website:

<http://www.socorro.com/fattire/area-map.html>

This list is not exhaustive. If these areas and trails were reclassified as wilderness this would be a big loss to the local cycling community. Please consider our interests in your assessment of lands suitable for wilderness. In my experience, the people who use these trails for mountain biking are eager to help with maintaining them in a sustainable way. In my reading of the original act it was meant to prevent cars, trucks and motorcycles from

using these areas, not bicycles.

Sincerely,

Luke Schmidt