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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Sandia Mountains wilderness proposal.

Cibola National Forest personnel: The purpose of this e-mail is to provide my comments on the new areas being proposed for wilderness designation in the Sandia Mountains of the Cibola National Forest.

Specifically, I am referring to (1) the areas in the foothills on the west side of the Sandias (north and south of the Elena Gallegos open space), and (2) the areas adjacent to the Sandia Peak ski area on the east side of the Sandias. I walk, hike, and mountain bike in these areas extensively for exercise and recreation.

(1) In regards to the areas in the foothills on the west side of the Sandias, I am against wilderness designation for these areas. I do not think the area meets wilderness requirements for solitude and quiet. When traveling the trails in these areas, I am within a few feet of the back yards of homes, and can literally look into the homeowners' living rooms. The noise of motor traffic is always audible. The lights of the city are so prevalent that I can walk the trails at night without a headlamp. I do not hike/bike in these areas for because of their wilderness values, but because of their convenience and accessibility.

My understanding is that nearly one half of trail users in these areas are bicyclists (mountain bikers). My estimate is that these are the most heavily used mountain biking areas in the entire state. A wilderness designation would eliminate the highest concentration of mountain biking in NM. (I am told that historical usage patterns are not a criteria for wilderness designation, but I cannot resist including this as an element of common sense into the argument.)

(2) In regards to the areas adjacent to the ski area on the east side of the Sandias, I am against wilderness designation for these areas. My reasons are similar to what I stated in (1). Not as many homes, not quite as close by. But, the elements of development are always present. Motor noise and lights are commonplace. An historical heavy bicycle usage, linking up with the ski area biking trail system.

Thank you for listening to my opinion on this matter. I urge you to drop these areas of the Sandia Mountains from wilderness consideration.

Sincerely,

Guy Dahms