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Comments: We Must Protect the Cibola for Future Generations

Thank you for soliciting comments on the Cibola's ongoing inventory for lands with wilderness characteristics.

It is CRITICALLY important to both carefully document wilderness characteristics and to make management decisions to protect those valuable characteristics for future generations.

Wilderness provides countless benefits, both for the forest ecosystem and for human visitors. Large untouched spaces are incredibly important—they provide opportunities for fully functioning ecosystems, create carbon sinks, and allow people to experience nature on a primal and often spiritual level.

Many areas in the Cibola clearly meet the required criteria to be considered wilderness, including areas in the San Mateo, Magdalena, Bear, and Datil Mountains.

Despite many local residents demonstrating their opposition to any such wilderness designation as an infringement upon what they consider their local "personal property" to do as they please upon, the Cibola belongs to the Nation, not just the "locals", as federal land. We MUST have places designated and set aside as Wilderness to preserve the intrinsic values of untrammelled natural ecosystems upon this planet. Humankind in its insatiable greed would otherwise swallow and consume all that exists upon the earth. Access to wilderness areas is still available to ALL citizenry and visitors with the caveat of means of travel limited to our own foot power without the means of mechanized transport. We therefore enter wilderness forests on nature's terms and take on, while we are in such special places, equal footing with the natural world (from whence we came long before the Industrial Age changed the earth forever). The US Forest Service is a steward of these public lands to ensure there is both multiple use and diversity of the Cibola including those areas designated as Wilderness for the hearty who would enter a more natural place than exists any longer elsewhere. Without wilderness areas we are dooming the land to every type of consumption and desecration that comes with use and over-use of such multiple use lands.

It is imperative to inventory these proposed wilderness areas, as well as any other large roadless areas as comprehensively as possible. Protection of these areas through the forest planning process and recommendations of these areas to Congress as suitable for permanent wilderness designation for future generations and the complex natural world within these boundaries. The local communities certainly benefit from a wilderness area in their back yard with tourism dollars being spent from folks coming to such a special place from around the world.

Thank you for considering my heart-felt comments in absolute support of wilderness designation to parts of the Cibola!

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