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Comments: Mt. Taylor Ranger District Vision Statement

Hello Larry Winn, Les Gaines, and the other members of the Magdalena landscape team.

Thanks for facilitating the Grants and Gallup plan revision meetings in the past month or so.

While I liked many aspects of the Mt Taylor RD landscape team vision statement (pages 1 and 2 of the Draft E & S Desired Conditions, lines 36-41 and 1-26) and thought it showed a great deal of effort on the part of the landscape team, there were a couple of areas that I would like the team to consider adding. (I discussed this at the Grants meeting with Les, and he asked me to submit these modifications.) On page 1, lines 37 and 38, the team wrote that they envision supporting "a commitment to stewardship as our most basic and deeply held value," but it does not mention anywhere in the rest of the statement support for the Mt Taylor RD for maintaining a healthy watershed. That to me is of the highest importance, given current drought conditions, apparent climate change, and the depletion of springs, most especially in the Zuni Mountains. The only place water is mentioned is on P. 2 line 8 - "enhanced water resources," which implies that water is an extractive resource, rather than a necessity for a healthy watershed.

It would also be desirable to see an expansion of what the team considers to be multiple uses. While most would consider multiple uses to include gathering forest products, rockhounding, grazing, hunting, fishing, OHV recreation, mountain biking, hiking, backpacking, etc., all of these are human-centered activities. I would like to see somewhere in the vision statement an acknowledgement that the forest lands have an intrinsic value - that is to say that the land itself, the wildlife, and native plants have a value also, aside from their value to human consumers. This would place an added value to a healthy watershed, not just for people in the area, but also for the native flora and fauna. It also provides consideration for wildlife corridors for both animals and plants, especially trees, which needs to be planned for in light of increasing drought and probable climate change.

I thank you for your attention in this matter and hope you will consider these modifications to your vision statement.

Respectfully, Susan Ostlie, Co-leader, Rio Grande Valley Broadband of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness