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Organization:

Title:

Comments: CNFRD Forest Plan Comment

To whom it may concern,

First, please allow me to apologize for any inconvenience that the late submission may cause. There was a lot of information to absorb, and I attended multiple meetings in order to make the most responsible and productive comments possible. I hope that my tardiness will not negatively affect the helpfulness of this information.

Please see the attached document form for my comments.

Also, please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any questions and/or updates regarding this forest plan; of particular interest to me is the schedule for the next public meeting(s). There does not appear to be anything posted quite yet.

Regards,

Bryan Andrada

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Document Reviewed (draft plan, wilderness process paper, map)Resource SectionPage #Line #Comment

CNFRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 1:

Roles and Contributions of the Cibola Ntn'l Forest RD's, Mount Taylor RD735-37Mount Taylor Ranger District (Vision): "We envision a landscape that is enhanced by a proactive policy of educating and informing the public, one which involves outreach to local schools, clubs, community groups, and businesses." Sandia RD should consider a similar vision regarding public outreach and education.

CNFRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 1:

Roles and Contributions of the Cibola Ntn'l Forest RD's, Sandia Ranger District105Sandia Ranger District (Vision currently under development): The Sandia Ranger District should consider adopting a similar policy as their sister district Mount Taylor with regard to education and public outreach, particularly if they wish to focus land use to those means.

CNFRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 1:

Roles and Contributions of the Cibola Ntn'l Forest RD's, Sandia RD1023Sandia Ranger District: Specifically identifies mountain biking as "experiencing the biggest growth among all activities." This is an observation that is being parroted by many land managers nationwide, in that mountain bikers are a primary source for dedicated partnerships among many different agencies, as well as advancing potential economic development in areas that are experiencing economic flux.

CNFRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 2:

General Recreation, Desired Conditions10636-39Desired Conditions: Lists mountain biking as a 'welcomed and

shared sustainable resource.' This is a critical acknowledgement as this activity has garnered increased popularity among a wide variety of traditional user groups; as such, proper consideration should be given to the continued development of trails and resources that will support it. This includes developing partnerships with clubs and individuals with a desire to advance mountain bike related recreational opportunities, with or without Forest Service supervision when it's appropriate. This would necessarily exclude any attempts by special interest groups to limit such activities where they can be managed appropriately, (cont'd, pg: 2)

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision Chapter 2: (cont'd, pg: 1)10636-39and without jeopardizing sensitive habitats or management area intent.

CNFMRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 2:

General Recreation, Desired Conditions107 1-2Desired Conditions: States that the Cibola Ntn'l Forest meets the demand for sustainable recreation. It should also be noted in the Guidelines of this section that "demand" will ultimately be measured by the amount of traffic, and not necessarily by comments made in the plan revision.

CNFMRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 2:

General Recreation, Desired Conditions 107 5Desired Conditions: States that user conflicts are minimized. The Management Approach in this section does not identify strategies that would help to minimize user conflicts, such as signage in high traffic areas and areas that are typically dominated by a particular subset of user groups.

CNFMRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 2:

General Recreation, Guidelines 107 30Guidelines: States that rock climbing should be balanced and managed by user demand and the need to protect other resources. Again, it should be noted that "demand" is based on the amount of traffic in any given area, and not by the comments put forth in the plan revision. Every effort should be made to accommodate these types of dispersed recreation in areas that will support it, particularly as a cross-over activity that would help alleviate additional strains in high traffic areas, and areas of user conflicts due to overlapping use.

CNFMRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 2:

Dispersed Recreation11133 Dispersed Recreation: Add "Education" to read Dispersed Recreation and Education for this section.

CNFMRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 2:

Dispersed Recreation and education111-114ALLBackground and Description: States clearly that dispersed recreation includes an extremely broad variety of uses. However, it should be noted that within the privilege of recreational opportunities there too exists an opportunity to educate emerging recreationists, as well the general public, in proper etiquette, moral responsibility, and resource management. The Forest Service should utilize these natural settings for such educational opportunities, which can serve to remind us that we are still products of nature.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision (cont'd, page 2)Chapter 2:

Dispersed Recreation and education111-114ALLRecreation is increasingly being isolated from the educational experience in public schools. It would be a disservice to our youth, as well as those who wish to participate in the outdoors, to continue to do so in nature. Therefore, it is prudent for the Forest Service to incorporate educational opportunities within the context of recreation, and design uniquely identifiable educational resources within its district with regard to sensitive habitats, vegetation, animal species, and geological/historical attributes. It is recommended that these settings are developed in areas, and designed in such a way, that are safe for children, those with developmental disabilities as well as physical handicaps.

CNFMRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 2:

Dispersed Recreation and Education, Desired Conditions 11139Desired Conditions: Include in this section the

desire to incorporate, develop, and maintain trails and trailheads for non-traditional uses, such as education, nature walks, handicap accessibility and other forms of public outreach where unobstructed by traditional multi-use and design intent.

CNFMRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 2:

Dispersed Recreation and Education, Standards11215Standards: Standards for non-traditional use developments, such as education, nature walks, handicap accessibility and other forms of public outreach should be identified within this section. These include but are not limited to safety, parking availability, and special use trail design.

CNFMRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 2:

Dispersed Recreation and Education, Guidelines11226Guidelines: Guidelines for non-traditional use developments, such as education, nature walks, handicap accessibility and other forms of public outreach should be identified in this section. These include but are not limited to educational resources, ADA accessibility/compliance, and permitting for large groups when necessary.

CNFMRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 2:

Dispersed Recreation and education1145, 7 & 12Management Approaches: States that various management objectives and strategies can be utilized to limit conflicts and increase sustainability. It should be considered in this section to include that any changes, introductions, regulatory decisions, or significant re-routing to existing trails should be given adequate notice to the prevailing user groups and volunteers prior to implementation. This would go far to maintain the mutual trust that develops between land managers and their public partners.

CNFMRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 2:

Dispersed Recreation and education 114 11 Management Approaches: When considering adding unauthorized trail construction to the trail system, the land manager should also consider that many purpose-built trails have particular design intent, and should be designated in a way that corresponds with the desired use. The land manager should consider in this section that other user groups have areas that already exclude mechanized use, and that some migration of mechanized use to purpose-built trails would help to alleviate conflicts in areas where traditional multi-use has been deemed appropriate.

CNFMRD:

Plan RevisionChapter 3:

MA's and DA's

Designated Wilderness 12823 & 24 (23) change "is" to are, (24) change "objective" to objectives. The sentence associates multiple objectives.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Chapter 3: Management Areas & Designated Areas, KAFB Withdrawal 140 11-12Kirtland Air Force Base Withdrawal: States that the "feasibility of conducting a limited number of activities (specified in the standards and guidelines) in this area will be studied. If these activities are acceptable to the Air Force and Department of Energy, they will be conducted in coordination with these agencies." It should be considered by the coordinating agencies that traditional public use restrictions have only recently been enforced within the northeastern corner of the boundary. (cont'd, pg: 5)

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Chapter 3: (cont'd, pg: 4)14011-12The enforcement in this area is not active or ongoing with any sort of regularity and only established by some vague signage in various states of disrepair, thereby giving some question to validity of any claims of trespass. The area in question comprises a number of pre-existing trails that can be utilized as connectors for a number of loop options by relocating the - (cont'd, pg: 5)Withdrawal Boundary to EXCLUDE a very small section located at the southernmost tip West Ridge Trail at the top of Otero Canyon, and

over to the Drop-In Trail. The area has been thoroughly surveyed for potential hazards as special use has been permitted for Air Force biologists (in cooperation with the Forest Service) to conduct migration research for various wildlife inhabitants; primarily bear, mountain lion, deer and bobcat. It should be noted that the wildlife does not appear to be affected by human recreation, as it is normal to see physical evidence of the wildlife outside of the Withdrawal Boundary. Upon the feasibility study for considering limited activity by the coordinating agencies, and in cooperation with the leading biologist, it would be forthcoming to consider granting legal, limited (to existing paths) non-motorized access to the existing trails that remain in the area previously mentioned.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms, "Management Area" 15719-20 "Management Area ~ A land area identified within the planning area that has the same set of applicable plan components. A management area does not have to be spatially contiguous." The definition should be elaborated to include "...components which are unique within its borders."

Document Reviewed (draft plan, wilderness process paper, map)Resource SectionPage #Line #Comment

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix C: Plan Revision Core Themes, Valuing Unique Places and Themes 171 15-19 Valuing Unique Places and Features: States that "These features contribute to society through provision of nature-based education opportunities, spiritual renewal, artistic inspiration, employment and economic development, and outdoor play and exercise. These services are critical for the cultural and physical health of our society. It is where people come to "get away from it all" and experience solitude in four congressionally-designated wilderness areas." The underlined part associating congressionally-designated wilderness to employment and economic development is misleading because wilderness is clearly defined by 'minimizing the impacts of humans, and where natural forces dominate'. (pg, 128; lines 6 & 7)

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix C: Plan Revision Core Themes, Managing for Sustainable Recreation and Education171 33

Managing for Sustainable Recreation: Add "Education" to read Managing for Sustainable Recreation and Education for this theme.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix C: Plan Revision Core Themes, Managing for Sustainable Recreation and Education171 34-35

Managing for Sustainable Recreation: A suggestion for the first sentence would be "The Cibola National Plan has a responsibility to provide recreational and educational programs that are resilient and relevant for future generations..."

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix C: Plan Revision Core Themes, Managing for Sustainable Recreation and Education 171 38

Managing for Sustainable Recreation: Suggest eliminating "recreation" for simplicities sake and beginning the sentence with "These programs..."

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix D: Description of Alternatives, Alternative A175-177ALL Alternative A: This proposed management alternative does not reflect the intent of the plan revision as a whole, and would not encompass the growing need for adapting to current trends with regard to plan objectives. I would not be in favor of this alternative for the reasons stated.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix D: Description of Alternatives, Alternative B, Mountainair RD 175-180 ALL MA's Mountainair Ranger District: Management Areas 1, 3, and 5 provide a great opportunity for non-motorized, low impact, multi-use trail options; with particular attention given to the south end burn scar where parts of the Cottonwood Loop Trail are still intact. Other opportunities include connecting the Cottonwood Loop Trail to the northern campgrounds (Red Canyon, 4th of July Canyon), and surrounding trails. Pending availability of resources, rehabilitation of the Cottonwood Trail would be the most favorable action for the near future.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix D: Description of Alternatives, Alternative B, Sandia RD (2)18111-17 Sandia Ranger District: The East Mountains Outdoor Education/Recreation MA is not clearly defined as to the types of activities that would be appropriate for such a designation. As an active participant in many traditional recreational activities, such as hiking and mountain biking, this is an area that has historically been a place of refuge for myself and many others. Protecting this area for future non-motorized, low impact, multi-use activities is very important. This type of management strategy would add the necessary protections to limit high impact developments in the long term while protecting traditional uses such as mountain biking and other forms of non-motorized wheeled conveyances, which are currently restricted within Wilderness boundaries. While education is a component that should be incorporated and encouraged within the overall management of the district, it is important to recognize that traditional non-motorized use within the Sandias is already somewhat strained due (cont'd, pg: 8)

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix D:

(cont'd, pg: 7) 18111-17 (a,b,c,d) to abundance of Wilderness that already exists. With that in mind, I believe it is necessary that educational, interpretive and underserved components be confined to areas that would not limit or disrupt existing or future developments for non-motorized multi-use activities, and where access and amenities, such as overflow/handicap parking, bathrooms, and proximity to more primitive environments (like Wilderness), already exist. Some of these areas would include Sandia Crest in cooperation with the Sandia Ski area, which could provide a shuttle service from the ski area to Sandia Crest where visitors could hike a portion of the Crest Trail and have the added benefit of enjoying a scenic lift ride down to the ski basin. This portion of the Crest Trail, or the access road to the rock house, could easily be developed for the additional safety concerns of small children, large groups and for people with physical/developmental disabilities. Other areas such as Doc Long have the necessary infrastructure, but lack access to more private, primitive settings. In such areas where a majority of the infrastructure needs already in place, additional trails with special purpose would need to be designed and constructed.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix D: Description of Alternatives, Alternative B, Sandia RD 181 18-19 (e) Sandia Ranger District: The East Mountains Outdoor Education/Recreation MA objective labeled (e) states that the recreation education component would not develop facilities and would not add any work. Developing a progressive strategy that meets the goals outlined in the management area over the next 15 years will require work. This objective should be modified or removed completely so as not to put in place limitation on adaptable strategies in the future.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix D: Description of Alternatives, Alternative B, Recommended Wilderness, Magdalena RD 181 24-31 (1,2,3,4,5) Recommended Wilderness: As mountain biking is my preferred activity in National Forests, and is the fastest growing activity in the Sandia Ranger District, I would not support Wilderness designation in areas where multi-use trails exist, or where the potential exists to connect trails systems by way of a non-motorized wheeled conveyance. Mountain biking as a growing activity brings welcomed opportunities to individuals within a given community. The San Mateo's are in close proximity to communities that could benefit from such activity. Wilderness would severely limit these benefits, since mountain biking is currently restricted within Wilderness boundaries.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix D: Description of Alternatives, Alternative C1821-14Alternative C: This proposed management alternative does not reflect the intent of the plan revision as a whole, and would not encompass the growing need for adapting to current trends with regard to plan objectives. I would not be in favor of this alternative for the reasons stated.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix D: Description of Alternatives, Alternative D, Magdalena RD182

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18329-36

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1-24Magdalena Ranger District: The Backcountry Wildlife and Conservation emphasis for the Magdalena's listed in this alternative would be a favorable alternative to Wilderness designations in Alternative B.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix D: Description of Alternatives, Alternative D, Sandia RD18332-37Communal Grazing: This proposed management alternative poses some extremely identifiable problems, not the least of which would allow for communal grazing in an area that is largely designated for OHV/motorized use. Another key component would be the lack of inclusion of management approach that is geared toward less impact on native plants and animals.

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Plan Revision

Appendix D: Description of Alternatives, Alternative D, Recommended Wilderness, Mount Taylor18340

Mount Talor Ranger Distirict: As mountain biking is my preferred mode of travel within the National Forests, I would not be in favor of managing areas as Wilderness that are in close proximity to existing multi-use designated trails, where the potential exists to extend this low impact activity into areas that provide opportunities for scenery and observance of National Landmarks, such is the case with parcel shown as D2_ADJ2. Similar management strategies may be employed to protect this National Landmark that would not exclude non-motorized travel.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix D: Description of Alternatives, Alternative D, Recommended Wilderness, Mountainair RD1844-

5Mountainair Ranger District: D4_ADJ4 appears to be in close proximity to improved campgrounds and roads, and does not fit Wilderness character. D4_ADJ1 and D4_ADJ2 pose no issues for maintaining Wilderness Character and should be considered for Wilderness inventory. Included in this inventory D4_ADJ7 and D4_ADJ8 should be considered for Wilderness for the same reason.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix D: Description of Alternatives, Alternative D, Recommended Wilderness, Sandia RD1849-10Sandia Ranger District: D5_ADJ9 is in very close proximity to I40 and is not appropriate for Wilderness. The proximity to private property is also a concern. Both of these conditions degrade the concept of Wilderness, and instead should continue to be managed as a buffer between areas of high traffic and areas already designated as Wilderness.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix D: Description of Alternatives, Alternative E, Alternative Recommended Wilderness185-

186AllAlternative Recommended Wilderness: The proposed alternatives for recommended Wilderness in this section are highly inflexible for an overall management plan that seeks to incorporate a variety low impact activities. This alternative does not support the growing need to create an environment that facilitates shared use and appreciation for the National Forest by all.

CNFMRD:

Plan Revision

Appendix E: Proposed Management Areas and Draft Alternatives Mapping¹⁸⁸ See Alternative B, Proposed Action Map. If the above conditions listed in the above comment regarding the Draft Management Area in Alternative B for the Sandia RD can be met, it is recommended that the Draft Management Area be extended to the easternmost boundary from North to South to include the entire current Forest Service boundary. Future development in this area would also fit the need to expand recreational and educational opportunities within the Sandias, and could potentially eliminate user conflicts due to increasing traffic within the existing trail system.