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Title:

Comments: WILDERNESS ISSUE ON MT LEMMON MTB TRAILS NEAR TUCSON AZ

Erin,

I was notified today of the potential for the Samaniego Ridge and the East Catalina areas to be designated as Wilderness. I have family in Tuscon and enjoy mountain biking in and around MT Lemmon.

I feel that this is un-necessary and would limit opportunity for recreation in the area. I am an avid Mountain Bicyclist, and I utilize trails in that area. These trails are unique, spectacular, and provide a very specific mountain biking experience, an experience that is NOT available on other trails in the Tucson region. If the designation for Wilderness is approved, these trails would no longer be open to mountain bike enthusiasts.

Tucson is currently a Gold Level Bicycling city, a designation given by the American League of Bicyclists. It is well known that Tucson is trying to achieve the highest level designation, the Platinum Level. One of the criteria for that designation is for the area to have open access to all levels of mountain biking, as well as road biking. By cutting off mountain bike access in the East Catalina and the Samaniego Ridge areas, this could detrimentally effect the application for the Platinum Level status.

The community leaders of the Tucson area depend heavily on tourism dollars. Inability to provide recreational opportunities that are open to ALL persons is detrimental to attracting tourism dollars. Considering the climate of Tucson, summer mountain biking opportunities are limited to the higher elevation trails that are located in this area - the Mount Lemmon area. Taking that away would severely limit any mountain biking in the whole Tucson region in the summer months.

Please, DO NOT make this area another Wilderness area. There are enough Wilderness areas in the Tucson region, and we need open areas to recreate in.

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