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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Coronado potential wilderness area plan comments

To whom it may concern:

This afternoon, while planning an 8-day mountain biking trip to Arizona for next week, I ran across a draft forest plan for new wilderness areas in the Coronado Nat'l Forest. Amazingly, this includes quite a few trails I've ridden on extensively in the past and hope to be able to continue riding on in the future. These include the Bug Springs, Green Mountain, and 50 Year Trail in the Catalina and Samaniego area, and some lesser used trails in the Chiricahuas. I'm particularly concerned because I don't see mountain biking listed as a current use in the plans, which unless I overlooked it, is a huge oversight on the part of the Forest Service. People like me come from around the country to ride some of these trails, and friends of mine in the Tucson and Phoenix area ride these trails regularly.

The addition of some of these small wilderness areas would also add more non-bike-friendly areas along the Arizona Trail, which has been constructed with the intent of creating a mostly-singletrack bike-friendly route across the state. In fact, this is the reason for this particular trip to Arizona. Adding more wilderness along this route would splinter what has evolved to be a spectacular and one-of-a-kind trail allowing mountain bikers to experience the remoteness of that part of the country without having to circumnavigate more than a few existing wilderness areas.

While I am an advocate for wilderness areas, the bicycle restrictions are frustrating, though I would be very pleased to see additional wilderness areas designated if more forms of human-powered transportation were permitted. Allowing horseback riders but not bicycles is an issue that I hope will receive more discussion in the coming years.

Thanks for reading,

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