

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/29/2019 11:00:00 AM

First name: Gary

Last name: Ely

Organization:

Title:

Comments: File 1 is our comments for the TMP

File 2 is an attachment for our comment on the map regarding road 217 to Sawmill Cabin

File 3 is an attachment of a picture of a road used by the public off the 54 road that is not signed. It goes through the Alpine-Clifton Boundary Fence.

Alternative 3 is not supported. Closing the roads 8369, 704, 217, 8463, 8463A & 8463B creates a loss of emergency access availability if 217 road is flooded or fire occurs. Residents and public at present can leave through San Carlos Apache Reservation via 8369 & 704. The closed roads hinder all emergency routes for Greenlee County Search and Rescue to get to lost or injured individuals, as well as fire crews quick access to wildfires. The next 10 years the East Eagle Mud Spring Fire Restoration project will need frequent access to these roads to facilitate the project. The Mexican Wolf Project needs access to the remote terrain, mostly during the spring & winter months. The roads have been maintained over the past years by the general public and permittees. After numerous floods this past ten years, maintenance has been on volunteers who use the forest for hiking, hunting, photography, wildlife watching and ranching. Volunteers need a reason to belong to the area. Also, the two track roads north of Honeymoon campground are used to trail cattle between pastures per the grazing agreement and help protect riparian management. The Eagle Creek FS land area is a small part of the overall watershed, 2/3 of the watershed lies on the San Carlos Apache Reservation. The percentage of damage by vehicles on the road is minimal compared to the flooding off the Reservation, which is beyond the local control.

Alternative 3 is not supported for livestock management. Loss of maintained roads will cause a significant increase in cost of maintaining range improvements. Certain improvements, ie [ndash] critical remote well and water systems, as well as historic cabins will not be maintained to the extent they need. Hunters having access to more areas help reduce predator issues. Denial to historic cabins and current roads will cause friction between the hunters [ndash] rancher relationships. Evidence found in the Socio-Economic Assessment noted the indirect economic consequences of closures on long established roads would be considerable for the surrounding communities. Therefore the indirect effect will harm and hinder range improvements, livestock production, and long standing relationships.

Alternative 3 needs to acknowledge the access road to the historic Eagle Creek School House should not be closed.

Alternative 3 does not support healthy recreation and sportsman hunting in Greenlee County. Too much of the area is closed to all game retrieval. Only a young healthy sportsman can remove game and no handicap method has been set up for the hunter in alternative 3. Rural Arizona activities are getting out on the forest as a family, seeing the sites, fishing and hunting.

Alternative 2 we support however it limits game removal for bear, lion, deer and even turkey. Wasting of game meat could be an increased issue due to the limited retrieval possibilities, ARS-17-340. This limitation affects the elderly, young and handicap and ignores safety for the individuals. This needs to be analyzed & addressed with more flexibility in Greenlee County. The forest is a healthy place for rural recreation, and families need to have places to go enjoy in a method of their choice from moutainbikes to full size vehicles. The USDA Forest should support and encourage positive recreation, without closing more area. Rural families depend on fire wood for heating and closing large areas to wood retrieval economically affects the local public.

Alternative 2 has no provision for cattle or horse removal if injured while hunting or in ranching activities. There are Mexican wolves that have and will continue to injure cattle and horses, therefore the animal will need to be removed for treatment immediately with no retrieval method available.

Alternative 2 has reduced dispersal camping to 1027 miles of road, 35% of roads open to public use. To close a significant amount of roads for camping may cause an indirect effect to the social economics of residents in the Apache Sitgreaves forest, high concentration will demand a need for more FS staffing and enforcement, social tension and strong competition for the elite sites, and an issue on future closing of camp sites early do to increase population needs. The RDEIS travel management map needs more detail regarding recreation sites, ingress and egress to private lands, and safety routes available during flooding and wildfires.

Thank you for letting us submit comments on a very large extensive and complex project. We support Alternative 2, except the above mentioned issues which affect Greenlee County in the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest, a very rural community.