

TABLAZON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

c/o 11 Kennedy Lane
Tijeras, New Mexico 87059
(505) 238-3272

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Cibola National Forest
2113 Osuna Road, N.E., Suite A
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87113-1001

Re: Sandia Ranger District Travel Management Project

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Tablazon Neighborhood Association has reached a decision and consensus with support from the other neighborhood associations. The Tablazon Neighborhood Association and single track motorcycle community have worked together to come up with an alternative solution for the numerous people who are passionately concerned about this issue and can agree with.

We are requesting that there be no improvements made on the trailhead that would encourage increased traffic now and in the future, i.e., enlarging the trails, paving the trails and adding restroom facilities. We are further requesting that the area be monitored to evaluate traffic in that area on an occasional as-needed basis. The majority of the neighborhood association is in favor of Alternative 4 or Alternative 5, both with modifications. Alternative 4 would need to be modified to bring the trail head in ¼ of a mile from the National Forest border and all current and future residential areas. We would still prefer limited access on 462. Although we can agree that Alternative 4 or 5, both with modifications, may be acceptable we still have a significant concern about the current completed EA study. We know the US Forest Service has completed the EA with the findings of no significant impact. However the Fugitive Dust Control Determination demonstrates that the current EA is inappropriate because it has now been determined by a government body that a significant impact does exist that is not being addressed by this EA. We are requesting that an Environmental Impact Study be completed and the Fugitive Dust issue addressed. It is apparent that the US Forest Service is not physically or financially prepared to handle the Fugitive Dust issue that will arise depending on the alternative selected. We are also concerned that a monitoring plan has not been completed. A monitoring plan is required for the project action and project area. The EA

document does not currently include one. Final decisions about, and acceptance of the proposed actions cannot be made without a monitoring plan.

There are multiple reasons for these specific requests, including, but not limited to:

- Danger to horseback riders;
- Danger to bicyclists/mountain bikers;
- Hikers, and all others using the trail system;
- Safety;
- Increased pollution;
- Disruption of wildlife;
- Damage to trails,
- Increased security concerns;
- Damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, and other forest resources;
- Harassment of wildlife and significant disruption of wildlife habitats; and
- Fire danger.

We would like to see the Tablazon trailhead, which runs approximately one-quarter mile inside the forest boundary, to be retained and to remain as it currently is. If possible, we are further requesting that a gate be installed somewhere between the south side of the trailhead and the beginning of the private properties. An access area next to the gate will be made to allow single track users, horseback riders, hikers and others of similar nature to enter. The homeowners and others supportive of this issue will bear the cost of a gate.

In addition to the concerns listed below, the purpose of this gate is for the protection of private property from further damage. You will find several instances of misuses of the roadways included in the Public Comment Forms. Some of these comments include improper travel during weather conditions causing abandonment of vehicles and the tearing up of the roadways, and people being chased by vehicles. These incidents are not just due to the issues surrounding the 4 x 4's and ATV's but the frequent users of 462 for illicit purposes.

The Tablazon Neighborhood Association and the single track users are also willing to assist the Forest Service in the maintenance and safety enforcement. There has been overwhelming support of these groups pledging \$100.00 per person to hire an employee whose focus would be on the maintenance of the Cedro trails. This is in the early stages of development. In addition, we are in the process of forming a Friends of Cedro Trails group, with a preliminary plan of pledging \$100.00 minimum per person involved.

Tablazon is a heavily populated area with many families with young children that moved here for the quality of life created by a safe, quiet and peaceful community. Many parents expressed concerns about safety.

We have concerns about designated use in this area. Collectively, we share some or all the following concerns, some of which were stated above:

- Impact on property values;
- Impact of the noise level;
- Danger to horseback riders;
- Danger to bicyclists/mountain bikers;
- Hikers, and all others using the trail system;
- Safety
- Increased road traffic throughout the Tablazon Community to access the trail head;
- Increased pollution;
- Disruption of wildlife;
- Damage to trails,
- Increased security concerns;
- Damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, and other forest resources;
- Harassment of wildlife and significant disruption of wildlife habitats;
- Conflicts between motor vehicle use and existing or proposed recreational uses of National Forest System lands or neighboring Federal lands;
- Conflicts among different classes of motor vehicle uses of National Forest System lands or neighboring Federal lands;
- Compatibility of motor vehicle use with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account sound, emissions, and other factors; and
- Fire danger.

As a neighborhood, we have many valid reasons for not wanting additional traffic in and out of the area and with having trail access in the Tablazon Neighborhood, including but not limited to narrow roadways, only one primary entrance, and the trails being so close to the National Forest boundary. A critical issue to consider is the designation of this area by the Community Wildfire Protection Plan as an area at risk due to the high risk of fire danger and poor exit availability. By the Forest Service's own admission, there is concern regarding the defensibility of this area in the event of a wildfire. We have talked with County Commissioner Michael Brasher and are aware that due to our road challenges and entry/exit issues, Tablazon would not even be approved as a subdivision for development if it was being developed now.

We are concerned that limiting motorized vehicle access to a few specific areas will significantly increase traffic flow and overpopulate these areas given the large and growing percentage of people interested in operating their motorized vehicles in the forest, not only from our East Mountain Neighborhoods but also from the 800,000+ people in the greater Albuquerque area.

Residents have questioned whether the environmental impact study has fully explored the cultural heritage and native sites. By separate letter, a Tablazon resident is sending photographs of sites of potential archeological interest.

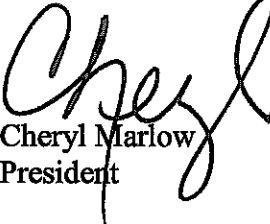
Please consider this letter our formal request for reconsideration of the proposed Travel Plan. Many mountain biking groups, equestrian groups, and others have shared with us that they are in favor of our proposal which allows the motorized vehicle enthusiasts areas, as well as allowing the non-motorized forest users a safe pleasant forest environment.

The consensus of Tablazon residents and the Homeowners Association's recommendation is that the trailhead in Tablazon be open to neighborhood motorized travel only and be closed to non-resident motorized travel. This will eliminate the traffic-related concerns the residents share. The consensus and recommendation is to not allow any motorized traffic, local or non-local, east of 462 and east of 12 (known as Meadow 2-track). This would reserve the following trails for non-motorized vehicle usage only: Lower Pine, Wildcat, Pinion, 11, 11-A, Pinion 2 Track, Lone Pine, Rocky Top, Poker Chip, and Bear Scat. Where 242, running east and west, intersects with Bear Scat and Bear Scat becomes Mahogany would be the southern boundary of the reserved non-motorized vehicle trails. This represents less than a quarter of the proposed motorized traffic being limited to non-motorized traffic. This will eliminate the other concerns we all share including, but not limited to fire danger and ability to safely enjoy the National Forest.

Thank you for your attention to and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

TABLAZON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION


Cheryl Marlow
President

CM/kym