



RE: Response to January 31, 2013 Travel Management Scoping Letter including Proposed Action for EIS

Neil Bosworth, Forest Supervisor  
Tonto National Forest  
2324 E. McDowell Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85006

Attn: Travel Management

Dear Supervisor Bosworth,

I am writing on behalf of the Trails Preservation Alliance in response to your request for comments on the upcoming Travel Management Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Tonto National Forest. We are very interested in following the progress of this planning effort and want to be added to the mailing list for this project.

The Trails Preservation Alliance (TPA) is a grassroots, 100 percent volunteer group, comprised of motorcycle trail riders. The Alliance has formed a 501c3 organization to preserve single track trails on our public lands and to inform the public about issues facing our recreational activity. Our intention is to be a viable partner, working with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to preserve the sport of trail riding. We are a strong advocate of the sport and will take the necessary action to insure that the USFS and BLM allocate to trail riding a fair and equitable percentage of access to public lands.

Before getting into TPA's concerns, I want to express my solid support for the Arizona Off Highway Vehicle Coalition and the great work that they do as partners of the Forest Service. Unlike many other user groups, the Arizona Off Highway Vehicle Coalition, and motorized users in general, make the effort to get out on the ground to help construct and maintain sustainable motorized trails. This is contrary to how we are portrayed by the environmental community. The fact is our dedication and efforts demonstrate our commitment to help build and maintain a sustainable recreation program. Please keep this in mind as you work to designate the Tonto's system of motorized roads and trails.

As your efforts to complete a travel management EIS move forward we want you to consider the following comments:



First, we are very concerned about the loss of single-track motorcycle trails to either closure or to widening due to use by other vehicles such as ATV's, UTV's and full size vehicles. While this may be acceptable to some, we want to be very clear that we prefer to ride on narrow, single track trails just like mountain bikers, hikers and other users. The single track experience is very different than riding on a trail that has been widened by other users.

Second, I want to point out that off-road motorcycle riding on single track trails is not a stagnant sport. Instead, as demonstrated by the increasing sale of off road motorcycles, it is a growing sport that engages the physical and mental skills and abilities of its participants as they enjoy the beauty of the Tonto NF. We are no different in our love of the land but, instead, have selected a different method of accessing the forest.

Third, as the number of users increase and former riding areas such as the Granite Mountain area of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve are closed to motorized recreation, more and more users will turn to the Tonto for riding opportunities. The Desert Vista area and the area around Wildcat Hill on the Cave Creek Ranger District have already been discovered by displaced riders. We fully expect that the Tonto will consider this growth trend and work hard to preserve existing single track and to identify opportunities to expand our sport.

In your proposed action you indicate that you have inventoried over 550 unauthorized routes and you acknowledge that there are additional routes that have not been inventoried. While it is certainly debatable as to how many of these routes should be added to the system, it clearly indicates that the existing trail system is not satisfying the needs of the recreational users in the area. TPA strongly advocates for more trails to be designated as components of the motorized trail system, not less as is typically the case when national forests tackle travel management. If new trails are built and maintained according to well-established design and construction standards, these trails will provide sustainable recreation opportunities for off-road motorcyclists.

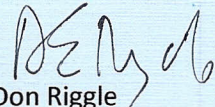
Lastly, as mentioned earlier, many of our single track trails are being widened by other motorized users. As an example of how our trails are being impacted, single track trail U2269 was only 24 inches wide earlier this month. Approximately two weeks later, due to use by wider motorized vehicles, it is now almost 12 feet wide! Similar results are occurring on many other trails in the Desert Vista and Wildcat Hill areas of the Cave Creek Ranger District. Beginning immediately, the Forest Service should make a distinction between motorcycles and other OHV's in both its design and management of trails in the Tonto. Instead of standing back and watching our motorized single track disappear, we believe the



Forest Service should be taking action **right now** to identify and sign single track trails and place barriers on these trails to prevent ATV, UTS and full-sized vehicles from accessing them. It is completely within the authority of the Service to take action to protect existing single track and associated resources while it performs its travel management analysis. It is irresponsible for the Forest Service to sit back and allow the trail footprint to expand at such an alarming rate.

We look forward to continuing our involvement in the travel management planning process and we expect that the Tonto NF will take our concerns seriously as it works to designate its system of motorized roads and trails. I can be contacted at the address on this letter, by e-mail at [info@coloradotpa.org](mailto:info@coloradotpa.org), or by telephone at 719-338-4106.

Sincerely,



Don Riggle  
*Director of Operations*  
Trails Preservation Alliance