

SAMPLE COMMENTS

When the Forest Service receives comments from the public, there are three categories: (1) non-issue, (2) significant issue, and (3) non-significant issue.

Here is an example of how this works:

1. Non-issue:

Writing a comment saying "The route closures in Tahoe are BS and I disagree with them". (This would be classified as a non-issue - it is a general statement and is not a specific comment related to the proposal and its effects)

If you just say that you disagree with the closures and that it is BS, it is a NON-ISSUE in the eyes of the FS. It's read, but tossed aside.

2. Significant Issue:

Specific comments regarding the proposal, specific disagreements with the proposal, not yet decided by law, regulation, or policy, etc.

If you give arguments and reasons as to why routes in TNF should remain open, attack the wording, the research, the assumptions, etc. in the DEIS, it is a SIGNIFICANT and SUBSTANTIVE comment. THIS IS THE TYPE OF COMMENT YOU WANT!!!

3. Non-Significant Issue:

I support the BRC proposed alternative, (This would be classified as non-significant - general support for another comment already provided - as mentioned many times, the **Forest Service does not count votes**)

If all you do is say you support an organization and it's stance and comments, your comment will be listed as a "non-significant" letter

Please note, the term "non-significant" does not mean that the comment is simply thrown out and disregarded. It is a bureaucratic term. The Forest Service MUST read, review, and consider all comments. All the more reason to flood them with comments! Make them work!

Your letters CAN make a difference!

Just one letter from a person here on Pirate literally saved 300 miles of routes in Eldorado National forest.

Other things to keep in mind:

1. You DO NOT need to be a land-use expert or guru to submit a comment! DO NOT just leave it up to those guys! Everyone can and should send in comments.

2. Just because a route is on the preferred alternative DOES NOT make it safe!! Remember that the "other side" will be sending in comments to CLOSE routes!

I have been told BLM is considering closing Hawks nest which is your HN692. I first drove this trail with a group of male jeepers. Climbing rocks and squeezing through narrow passages really gave me a thrill. I talked about the fun run so much that a bunch of us women got together and had a woman's only driver run. Don't close it. I'm proud I was able to drive

I am opposed to the closing of HN 692, Hawks Nest Trail located in the Havasu BLM Unit. This is trail approximately 1.18 miles long, (entry is on HN690, Dutch Flat Road and also exits on HN690). It was GPS'd by the Havasu 4 Wheelers and turned in with a map printout, showing longitude & latitude, to the BLM office in the 90 day period

(Oct.1-Dec. 31, 2005). BLM personal were driven over the trail in the spring of 2006 and GPS'd it themselves. **It shows up on Map C as closed.**

Map D also shows the Trail as Route HN692, and has designated it **open**

HN692 documentation states inaccurately that this is a standard stock 4x4 route.

Actually, the Havasu 4 Wheeler trail difficulty rating for this trail is a 3.5, Harder Moderate. In addition to a stock 4X4, it recommends 33" tires with aggressive tread; one locked differential, high & low gearing, for experienced drivers. It is potentially dangerous, with large rocks, ruts, steep slopes, loose surface, and narrow clearances that need to be negotiated.

Hawks Nest (HN692 parallels HN 690, The Mohave Road to the east. This a totally different Route and does not duplicate Hawks Nest. The Dutch Flat Road (HN 690) is a feeder trail to a number of other trails (routes). It is not challenging, being rated as a two. This route is considered easy, requiring the use of 2 wheel and some 4 wheel (2 wheel in the area adjacent to Hawks nest), while the Dutch Flat road may have some rocks, lose road surface, and ruts, it has a reasonable line for driving.

Hawk's Nest (HN692) is a training trail. Its moderate length (1.18 miles) is ideal for drivers to further develop driving skills after lifting & locking their 4X4. It is not dangerous, yet challenging. **Our club has also used it to train female drivers.** In fact a number of Powder Puff runs driven by and led by women, have been made over this trail

HN692 documentation erroneously states this Route is not maintained. Our club has driven this trail on official runs with small groups for years. Prior to leading a run on Hawks Nest (HN692), Run Leaders (Trail Boss), accompanied by one or two other jeeps (or more) will travel this route to insure it is maintained in a manner to assure safety. They will fill in holes and washouts caused by heavy down pour, they will check & correct erosion where possible. If necessary, they will do limited clipping of invasive plant specie such as salt cedar. They will pick up and remove trash & debris that has washed in or has been left by inconsiderate off roaders. The club run (and we do not charge admission, or registration) that follows, then continues the maintenance practiced by the pre run. In the past years the H4W have led many runs over Hawks Nest

In closing, I reaffirm this route (HN 692) should be left open. Not only is the Route Evaluation tree documentation inaccurate and incomplete, the trail is one of the few short training trails now available. Should anyone break a vehicle, or become sick or hurt, it is easy to quickly move vehicles or individuals to the Mohave Road & immediate help.

As you know, this is a very favorite spot for hundreds of seniors, many who travel for extended periods into the area during the winter. We all have favorite trails we find great pleasure in off-roading to AND WHICH, BECAUSE OF OUR AGE, CANNOT HIKE INTO BECAUSE THEY ARE NOW CLOSED. Please, don't assume because we are not there the whole year through, that we won't be very angry if trails are closed to favor the hiking abilities of young environmentalists or ambitions of absentee politicians (oops, a little blunt, but this stirs me a bit.)

The comment I made was about the trails “being broken.” I don’t know if you’ve looked hard at any one trail but there are a lot of them on the .kml file map which are broken into pieces. Green lines go and stop and start up in the middle of nowhere. Because of the shortage of OHV routes necessary to reasonably meet the needs of the public, every existing motorized route is extremely important

The needs of the public for motorized recreational opportunities include a variety of trails for different skill levels. Also, routes with minimal traffic are needed as practice routes for beginning riders

Wilderness is closed to motorized vehicles and equipment. Therefore, multiple-use lands should be open to motorized vehicles and equipment. Wilderness criteria and standards should not be applied to multiple-use lands

The quality of our experience has been significantly reduced. It must also quantify the significant cumulative impact that the closure of a system of road and trails would have collectively when enough routes are closed to eliminate a good motorized day outing. An incomplete analysis is not acceptable under NEPA requirements.

Decisions to close motorized recreation must not be made on the basis of theoretical or assumed impacts to the natural environment. In order to avoid arbitrary and capricious decisions, site specific data and monitoring must be presented and demonstrate a measure significant impact.

The evaluation must adequately consider the growing popularity of motorized recreation, the aging population and their needs for motorized access, and the increased recreation time that the aging population has and looked forward to enjoying public lands in their motor vehicles.

In many cases illegal trails are created in response to the lack of adequate motorized opportunities. If there were an adequate number of OHV trail systems, then the need to create illegal trails would be greatly diminished. Therefore, the catch-22 of the closure trend is that in the end it feeds the illegal activity. In other words, it would be a more advantageous and equitable situation to pro-actively manage motorized recreation.

It is not environmentally and socially responsible to squeeze motorized recreationists into the small possible numbers of areas and routes, yet this is the goal being pursued by the Kaibab National Forest. There is also a significant public safety aspect associated with squeezing everyone into a small area as accidents will increase with too many motorized recreationists on too few routes.

Each motorized road and trail must have adequate site-specific analysis to determine all of its values including motorized recreational value.

One of the basic requirements of NEPA is to “achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities” (Public Law 91-190, Title I, Section 101 (b) (5)). The wording of NEPA was carefully chosen and was intended to produce a balance between the natural and human environment. NEPA was not intended to be used to destroy the human environment. However, the agency is using NEPA to

seriously impact the human environment through a series of travel plan decisions aimed at removing the motorized public from public lands. This trend is not right and must be corrected by implementing a pro-recreation alternative as part of this action.

The current set of alternatives does not include a Pro-Recreation alternative. NEPA requires analysis of all viable alternatives and all significant issues. A Pro-Recreation alternative is viable and needed by the public

The sport of extreme 4 wheeling has really only taken off in the last few years and is gaining popularity with the national competitive events regularly scheduled each year. Extreme rock crawlers are like professional athletes—there are not many in the sport—but they have a large “fan base”. They are like the NASCAR drivers—not many of them—but a much larger fan base.

These events of “extreme rock crawling” can have a very positive impact of the LHC community in the visitors and dollars it brings into the area as well as the local people that have been enjoying the local “extreme trails” for years.

Although nature created the Lake Havasu area “Extreme Trails” centuries ago, - waterways, gullies, washes—they are almost impossible to see because after each rainfall the tracks disappear and the rocks and boulders make the “trail” impossible for the average person to even realize that a vehicle could “traverse the trail”. The trails also don’t show up on maps, Google earth, or aerial photographs.

“I would like to request you consider having HN 619 remain an open trail. HN 619 is a scenic, challenging alternative to HN 605. I know they both start and end in the same place, but one is like a highway up a wash and the other is like a scenic route on a well established trail.” Then our members can all add the reasons they want to after they ask their specific request. Examples:

- a. One is most scenic
- b. One is more challenging
- c. I am old and can no longer hike—4 wheeling is how I see the desert
- d. I am physically disabled—enjoy desert in Jeep—this road offers variety
- e. This trail is well established—a club favorite—offers moderate challenges
- f. This trail is one of our club FAVORITES and provides a fun, interesting, challenging, variety, to access several club favorite trails
- g. This trail is well defined and has no off shoot trails that encourage trail proliferation
- h. Etc.

If we wanted to make any comment at the meeting—we could comment on the concept of the STANDARD WASH OPEN AREA. Example: By stopping the NE boundary at the line they are—there are many trails that will just come to an abrupt end! This will encourage people (out of town guests on a motorcycle) to just ignore the boundary and continue on. This will develop in them an attitude of “The boundaries really do not mean

anything”—thus encouraging more violations! A much easier solution would be to use the natural boundary provided by mother nature—West Mohave Wash. It runs in the exact direction they desire and is a natural cliff/wall barrier with no trails continuing thru it! The very wide and much used West Mohave Wash would be a very easily signed, and enforced—and would make sense when people see it

While the idea of an open area in the Standard Wash area is a fine idea (good idea, great idea) by not using the natural mother nature created boundary of West Mohave wash the northern boundary is going to be very difficult to enforce it will invite people to violate the boundary it will encourage users to feel that enforcement is non-existent for the whole area around LHC if the northern boundary is not enforced. with the present staff, and budget challenges in the future—enforcement on an artificial boundary that does not make any logical geographic sense will be next to impossible

The NEPA mandates that the federal government consider the “environmental impacts” of all federal decisions. If there is an environmental impact, the federal government also has to consider the economic, local tax base and social impacts of the community

Because of the shortage of OHV routes necessary to reasonably meet the needs of the public, every existing motorized route is extremely important

Responsibility to respect and preserve the natural environment: We are practical environmentalists who believe in a reasonable balance between the protection of the natural environment and the human environment.

Responsibility to work with land, resource, and recreation managers. We are committed to resolving issues through problem solving and not closures

Motorized recreationists are the only one to lose in every travel plan action. The National OHV policy was not intended to be a massive motorized closure process but that is how it is being used.

The current BLM management trend towards massive motorized closures (25 to 75% of the existing routes) is not responsible to the public’s needs for motorized access and recreation and is contrary to the multiple-use management directives specified by congress. The agency can no longer ignore that motorized access and recreation are the largest (over 50 million) and fastest growing group of visitors.

Many federal actions have led to the continual closure of motorized recreational opportunities and access and at the same time the number of OHV recreationists has grown to 50 million and at the same time other outdoor activities have declined 18 to 25% (Journal of Environmental Management 80 (2006) 387–393, <http://www.redrockinstitute.org/uploads/PNAS.pdf> and <http://www.msnbc.m> Maze Sample Letter 2—several variables

(Several options for 1st paragraph—clearly stating opposition to C—and asking for option D)

**I strongly encourage you to re-consider proposing Alternative C—Alternative D is the only one that will make sense in the long run.

**I oppose alternative C and encourage you to select alternative D, because I feel alternative C will cause more problems than it will solve, and would greatly reduce the quality of the off highway touring experience.

**I know the Havasu office of the BLM has devoted many hours in the last 5 years to come up with the best alternative between the 4 choices. I feel strongly that alternative D is the only choice that will achieve meaningful and lasting results.

**I respectfully ask you to consider selecting alternative D, instead of alternative C. In many cases illegal trails are created in response to the lack of adequate motorized opportunities. If there are an adequate number of OHV trails, then the need to create illegal trails would be greatly diminished.

**I strongly support alternative D. Alternative C will only encourage people enjoying the desert to become violators, or law breakers. Closing well traveled trails that people have been using for years that are simply more enjoyable, more scenic, or more challenging than the one left open in alternative C that goes down the middle of a big wide wash will not work.

(Middle paragraph—listing the exact sections for the BLM to recognize and consider)

**Alternative C closes several very important sections of one of my favorite trails in the Standard Wash area. The very popular trail is called The Maze. The following sections are closed in alternative C:

HN 154, HN 258, HN 614, HN 619, HN 620, HN 624, HN 632, HN 651

Alternative D does not close any of the above sections.

**Alternative C closes some of the most interesting and challenging, and fun parts of one of the most popular trails in the Standard Wash area—“The Maze”. Alternative D does not close any of the following sections:

HN 154, HN 258, HN 614, HN 619, HN 620, HN 624, HN 632, HN 651

These sections are all critical to the off highway experience of the Maze Trail.

(Final paragraphs)

***One of the greatest hobbies enjoyed by myself and many of my friends is Jeeping on the trails surrounding the Lake Havasu area. Standard wash has an amazing collection of variety, scenery, and challenges. Alternative C take the majority of the “best parts” of the Maze trail and forces traffic onto wide well traveled flat washes that years ago were the main roads in the area. Forcing all traffic onto just a few “wide flat washes” will greatly

reduce the off highway touring experience and merely encourage people to search for more fun trails—hence causing more trail proliferation in the long run.

**Alternative D

Decisions to close motorized recreation should not be made on the basis of theoretical or assumed impacts to the natural environment. In order to avoid arbitrary and impulsive decisions, site specific data and monitoring should be used to measure and demonstrate impact on certain trails. Measuring and monitoring of the amount of traffic on the suggested trails to be closed in alternative C was not done.

****I strongly urge the Lake Havasu BLM to consider recommending alternative D for adoption.

Sincerely,

Signature

The MAZE Trail—Overview

The Maze Trail is a loop trail 18.5 miles in length that is rated a medium in difficulty for a slightly modified Jeep. The trail is named the “Maze” because it winds in and out, around, and up and down an “amazing” collection of fun and challenging obstacles and great vistas. The obstacles vary in difficulty from fairly easy to quite challenging. It is an excellent trail for drivers to develop skill and gain confidence in their ability and the capabilities of their vehicles while remaining on well defined trails.

The Maze consists of the following “BLM numbered segments” closed in Alternative C:

HN 154, HN 258, HN 614, HN 619, HN 620, HN 624, HN 632, HN 651

In Alternative D, all the 8 above critical segments remain open

Alternative C closes the above sections for no real valid reason. They simply recommend closing the above sections to force traffic onto well traveled “main washes” instead of the scenic and challenging loops that leave and rejoin the wash. Another reason they give is that the areas suggested to be closed are “potential habitats” of various animals. By eliminating the above segments the trail would no longer be anything more than a drive out one wide wash and returning via another wide wash.

Lost Trail—Overview

In Standard wash area (a large delta like area—also called a braided stream area)—there are 3 main entrances from highway # 95 heading generally NE. The main, and most used one, is from the kiosk area. The second most used one is from scenic turnout. The 3rd one is between these two entrances and just south of the gravel pit complex.

The Lost Trail is a delightfully scenic and interesting trail that connects two wide main washes/roads (HN 420 with HN 605) The main road/trail is the one from the kiosk, and is numbered HN 420. The middle entrance/road mentioned is HN 605) Lost trail got it's name from the fact that it is hard to find; but once found follows a very narrow wash that wiggles around between the hills on each side of it as it connects two major wash areas. For people that are aware of the trail it provides a fun, scenic, and challenging (a medium challenge for a stock Jeep) way to cut across between two main areas of trails. It can be a short stand alone trail but is normally used as part of other trails. It is a significant part of the MAZE TRAIL, SPAGETTI TRAIL, and UPPER JUPITER (when starting from the scenic turnout)

Alternative C would close almost the entire trail. It would close 5 sections:
HN 154, HN 258, HN 332, HN 676, HN 980

Alternative D would not close any of these sections

We can not really see any real reason to close the trail except there are other main washes in the area (big wide flat ones), that most of the traffic can be concentrated on. This violates one of the goals of TMP (Travel Management Plans) in the first place by not recognizing "the needs of the public for motorized recreational opportunities to include a variety of trails for different skill levels. Also, routes with minimal traffic are needed as practice routes for beginning riders".

To: BLM Lake Havasu Field Office TMP
Attn: Project Manager
2610 Sweetwater Ave.
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86406

From
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86405

Re: Public Comment Form
Comments relating to Havasu Field Office TMP

Dear Sirs:

I can not support Alternative C. I feel you should have alternative D as your recommended alternative.

Alternative C cuts out critical parts of one of our club (Havasu 4 Wheelers) most popular trails—The Maze. Alternative C closes the following critical parts of the trail:

HN 154, HN 258, HN 614, HN 619, HN 620, HN 624, HN 632, HN 651

Alternative D does not close any of these pieces or parts of the trail we call "The Maze".

Alternative D allows the trail to be run as an 18.5 mile continuous loop through some of the most scenic and challenging areas. The trail allowed by alternative D allows some great views from well traveled trails along ridge lines and fun and challenging trails that wind thru narrow washes. Alternative C forces traffic to concentrate in wide washes with little scenic value and almost no challenge at all. It does not make sense, either environmentally or socially, to force motorized recreationists into the smallest possible numbers of trails and routes, yet this appears to be the goal of alternative C.

One of the fun parts of Jeeping in the area of the Maze is that an older person, like myself, can enjoy great scenery and also enjoy fun challenges that my Jeep is able to do. Alternative C appears to be an attempt to force more traffic onto the most traveled washes and eliminates some of the most scenic and inspiring loops available just off to the side of the main washes.

Thank You,

Signature.

LOST TRAIL—sample letter

Re: The Lost Trail

(1st paragraph-clearly stating opposition to C—and asking for option D)

**I know the Havasu office of the BLM has devoted many hours in the last 5 years to come up with the best alternative between the 4 choices. I feel strongly that alternative D is the only choice that will achieve meaningful and lasting results.

The lost trail is one of my favorite trails in the Standard Wash area. Alternative C would close almost the entire trail. It would close 5 sections: HN 154, HN 258, HN 332, HN 676, HN 980.

The Lost Trail is a delightfully scenic and interesting trail that connects two wide main washes/roads (HN 420 with HN 605). It is used as a connector route for several main trails. Instead of driving up wide washes with a large volume of traffic where the surface has been washboarded with large “whoop de dos”, it allows a person to navigate a slightly challenging trail down a very narrow wash with a stock Jeep. It is an excellent trail for new/beginners to practice their off highway driving skills. When the Brittle Bush are in bloom it is a favorite trail to view all the yellow blossoms on the banks of the wash.

I feel it would be a good decision for the BLM to include these trail parts as open, or just adopt alternative D which already includes them and many other critical parts of trails that are closed in alternative C.

Thank you,

Signature