



**SOCORRO COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RESOLUTION № 2019-56**

**SUPPORTING CIBOLA FOREST PLAN ALTERNATIVE “C”, OPPOSING THE
DESIGNATION OF ADDITIONAL WILDERNESS WITHIN SOCORRO COUNTY AND
OPPOSING THE DESIGNATION OF WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS**

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners met in a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, August 27, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the Socorro County Annex Building, 198 Neel Ave., Socorro, New Mexico; and,

WHEREAS, a significant portion of the Cibola National Forest is located within the boundaries of Socorro County the management of the forest touches the lives of almost every inhabitant; and,

WHEREAS, a local government, the County brings a different perspective than the special interest groups, as the County is concerned about its citizens and local economy that will be affected by the revised plan; and,

WHEREAS, the United States Forest Service is in the middle stage of a forest plan revision under the 2012 Forest Planning Rule, 36 CFR 219, that will describe the strategic direction for management of forest resources for at least the next 15 years; and,

WHEREAS, the 1964 Wilderness Act provides that the areas designated as wilderness must be untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor, who does not remain... undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, to be managed so as to reserve its natural conditions; and,

WHEREAS, the areas considered for wilderness designation contain roads, sites of special events, numerous prospecting claims, areas of outdoor recreation, locations used by hunters and outfitters, historic areas of fuel wood and timber, and are adjacent to traveled roads and state highways; and,

WHEREAS, as recognized in the draft Forest Plan, the Cibola Forest lands provide “livestock forage, firewood and other fire products, recreation opportunities, scenery, cultural and heritage resources, clean water and air, minerals, fish and wildlife, a myriad of special uses

such as communication sites and energy transmission corridors, and many other ecosystem services and benefits; and,

WHEREAS, the draft plan also recognizes that “[s]ustainable livestock grazing contributes to the long-term social, economic and cultural diversity and stability of local communities, and help to preserve the rural landscape, cultural heritage and long-standing tradition;” and,

WHEREAS, an independent study conducted by Ruzitis and Johnson (2006) determined that wilderness compromises access to resources traditionally utilized for extractive economic activities; and,

WHEREAS, the designation of additional wilderness jeopardizes a variety of economic activities that helps bolster the County’s economy, as the wilderness designation guidelines in the Forest Plan prohibits commercial activities in wilderness areas, prevent motorized and mechanized transport access into adjacent wilderness areas, precludes the issuance of special use permits for the wilderness; and,

WHEREAS, the designation of additional wilderness within the County would impede access to each of the above-described uses of portions of the Cibola Forest; and,

WHEREAS, the United States Forest Service has designated more wilderness area than is required or appropriate in Socorro County; and,

WHEREAS, a healthy ecological condition contributes to a healthy, sustainable social and economic condition, which is essential to forest health; and,

WHEREAS, considering additional wilderness area in Socorro County is not appropriate, is not consistent with Forest Service acts and philosophy, and directly conflicts with the needs and uses of the community; and,

WHEREAS, forest reserves are for the purpose of preserving a perpetual supply of timber for home industries, preventing destruction of forest cover which regulates flow of streams, and protecting local residents from unfair competition in the use of forest and range; and,

WHEREAS, the 1960 Multiple Use, Sustained Yield Act mandates that “national forests shall be administered for outdoor recreation range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes;” and,

WHEREAS, the 1974 Forest and Rangelands Renewable Resources Planning Act authorized long range plans for each national forest to ensure the future supply of forest resources while maintaining a quality of environment.

WHEREAS, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System was created by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-542), enacted by the U.S. Congress to preserve

certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations.; and,

WHEREAS, rivers may be designated by Congress or, if certain requirements are met, the Secretary of the Interior. Each designated river is administered by either a federal, state, or tribal agency, or as a partnership between any number of these government entities and local NGOs. Designated segments need not include the entire river and may include headwaters and tributaries; and,

WHEREAS, rivers so designated, as identified in the plan, essentially further restrict the use of the public land by the inhabitants of the county and result in a cultural taking and strictly limit the physical ability of persons with disabilities, disabled veterans and senior citizens from have access to public land.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Socorro County that it is the position of the Board to support alternative C of the Cibola National Forest Mountain District Plan(s).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED although the Board supports alternative C it opposes any plan, including alternate C, to the extent it designates additional wilderness within the unincorporated boundaries of Socorro County as the County is fundamentally opposed to the designation of additional wilderness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED although the Board supports alternative C it opposes any plan, including alternate C, to the extent it designates potential wild and scenic rivers.

APPROVED, ADOPTED, AND PASSED on this 27th day of August 2019.

Martha D. Salas
MARTHA SALAS, CHAIR
DISTRICT II

Manuel Anaya
MANUEL ANAYA, VICE-CHAIR
DISTRICT III

Absent
JOE R. GONZALES, MEMBER
DISTRICT I

voted yes
GLEN DUGGINS, MEMBER
DISTRICT IV

Antonio R. Martinez
ANTONIO RAY MARTINEZ, MEMBER
DISTRICT V

ATTEST BY:

Betty Saavedra
BETTY SAAVEDRA, COUNTY CLERK

