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To: [FS-appeals-southwestern-regional-office](#)
Subject: Gila Travel Management Plan Appeal
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Regional Forester, Appeal Deciding Office

I am writing this email as an appeal to the Travel Management Plan on the Gila National Forest. Overall, I feel that no change should be made on OUR National Forest. It is obvious that no public input was taken into consideration when deciding upon the travel management plan and doubt that any appeal letters will be considered either. Kelly Russell has not taken into consideration the people who actually use this forest. She has just applied the "blanket" road closures just the same as other forests have done, without input of the people who use and own the forest. This is not the democratic process that our federal employees should follow. Our elected officials who represent the people affected by these road closures are all against the travel management plan. However, being that our Federal Government is supposed to act as a democracy, for the people by the people, I am writing this letter of appeal. Also, many of the reasons for the chosen plan given by Kelly Russell are either based entirely on limited opinions of Forest Service personnel or incomplete scientific data. There are no valid, scientific reasons given for the decision made Kelly Russell; a hired, not elected by the people official.

Our National Forests have gone from *The Land of Many Uses* to the land of *LIMITED* uses. I understand the need for roadless areas, and at time enjoy going into these wilderness areas myself. However, there are many times I like to enjoy OUR National Forest in other ways and with my young children that are limited by age and size by the distance they can go. We have plenty of wilderness (roadless) areas within the Gila without more restrictions on access to PUBLIC land. I feel no roads should be closed at all. I do understand that this is not going to happen. I can understand short (half mile or less) spur roads that lead nowhere being closed. I can understand not having an "open forest" where people can drive anywhere within the forest. However, many of the roads that are going to be closed actually lead to places such as water tanks, trails, etc. Examples of some of these roads are 4029E, 4028L, 4028P, 4029F, and 506 leading from Little Walnut up Bear Creek. These are just very few examples of needless road closures, there are many more miles of roads being closed. These are example of roads that are well over a mile long and actually lead someplace. Restricting roads to ATV, UTV, and auto also is discriminatory to the people who own this land. The fact that I have an ATV gives me special access to areas that people in trucks cannot go. It is their forest just as much as it is mine. Why are they restricted? Why is a UTV restricted to an area but an ATV is not?

The Gila is not like other forest, smaller acreage and located near large urban populations. The Gila covers a vast area and is surrounded by rural populations. These are the people that use this area and they should be the deciding factor in the travel management plan. The Forest Service has gone a long way to alienate the communities that surround the Gila. The Gila does not see the usage, nor the damage that small forests located near large urban ares do.

My other concern is with the decision to allow game retrieval only within 100 yards of open roads. At that distance no one needs the aide of a vehicle to retrieve game. This decision

leaves hunters in a moral dilemma. Either drive off road to retrieve large game animals breaking this new useless Forest Service rule or risk wasting game meat and violating Game and Fish rules of wanton waste of game, especially during the warmer early seasons. Above and beyond these rules is what is owed to that animal, not taking a risk on losing some of the meat. Driving one or two trips in and out to retrieve game will not result in resource damage nor lead to the establishment of "unauthorized" roads. Kelly Russell could not give even just one example of damage occurring from game retrieval, because there are none. In most cases signs of travel will be gone in a very short length of time. Not everyone is physically capable of packing out a big game animal and not everyone can afford horses to pack out game. This rule violates the rights of our older citizens, citizens with limited mobility, and most importantly our youth; all of whom own this land equally to the physically fit. The only choice left for most is road hunting or violating this travel management ruling.

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