



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Red Rock
Ranger District

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File Code: 1910/2720/2330
Date: February 28, 2012

Dear Planning Participant:

In recent years there have been many concerns expressed about increasing recreation use of the National Forest in and around the Sedona area. Recreation and tourism have steadily increased over the years and continue to rise. There are concerns that some trails and roads have or will become too crowded and that the recreation experience will be degraded. Social conflicts between different user groups are also a potential issue.

Soldiers Pass is one area where concerns have been raised for several years. Permitted outfitter/guide jeep use, motorized and non-motorized use by the general public, the small geographic area, and that access is through a residential neighborhood have resulted in social conflicts and suggestions that use in the area exceeds capacity.

To that end, the Red Rock Ranger District has recently completed a year-long study of motorized use levels in Soldiers Pass. Use was measured in terms of encounters – the number of times one sees another person or party while recreating in the area. The Forest Plan prescribes encounter levels of 15 per day for Soldiers Pass; the monitoring study revealed an average of 12 per hour. Overall, use in Soldiers Pass exceeds recommended levels 98% of the time. Information about this study can be found in the attached Encounter Level Monitoring Report.

The District must now consider how to manage recreation use in the Soldiers Pass area to become compliant with Forest Plan direction. To that end, we are seeking input from the public. Your suggestions, thoughts, and comments will inform our development of a Proposed Action.

Please send your written comments to:

Julie Rowe, Recreation Special Use Staff Officer
Attn: Soldiers Pass
Red Rock Ranger District
P.O. Box 20429
Sedona, AZ 86341

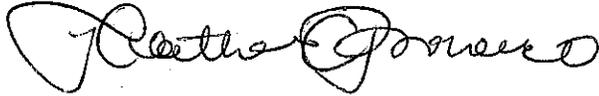
or by email to: comments-southwestern-coconino-redrock@fs.fed.us. Please include "Soldiers Pass" in your subject line to have your email routed correctly.



We welcome comments any time, but to be most helpful in this process please submit your comments by April 30, 2012.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Julie Rowe at 928-203-2915 or jrowe@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Heather C. Provencio".

HEATHER C. PROVENCIO
District Ranger

cc: Jeffrey L Gilmore, Eric G LaPrice, Charlotte Minor