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26500 W. Agoura Road • Suite 102-552 • Calabasas, CA 91302 • 818.206.8213 • CORBAmtb.com • info@corbambt.com

June 6, 2012

Bob Hawkins <socal_nf_imp_amendment@fs.fed.us>

Attn: LMP Amendment

Cleveland National Forest

10845 Rancho Bernardo Road, Suite 200

San Diego, CA 92127-2107

Re: 2012 SoCal National Forest Land Management Plan Amendments

Dear Mr. Hawkins et al,

CORBA, the Concerned Off-Road Bicyclists Association, a chapter of the International Mountain Bicycling Association, have examined the supplied data for Land Management Plan amendments for the Angeles National Forest and attended two of the public meetings about the same. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed amendments to the Land Management Plan for the Angeles National Forest.

With regards to the expansion of the Non-Motorized Backcountry zone along the West Fork of the San Gabriel River, we are pleased to see that the zone's expansion does not include the Rincon-Redbox fire road and the West Fork fire road through to it's junction with the Rincon Redbox road. It is unclear from the supplied data whether access to Pine Mountain is impacted, though it appears that the fire road to the summit of Pine Mountain is in fact along the border of this designated area. Our concern is that the data used to determine the expansion of the BCNM area may be as old as the 1970's and we want to ensure that the legal boundaries do in fact exclude these popular fire roads based on on-the-ground data.

For the proposed Fish Canyon Recommended Wilderness Area we do see potential problems. The most popular singletrack trail for cyclists in the area to the immediate north of the proposed RW is the Golden Eagle trail. This trail appears in a 1990 guidebook to mountain bike trails, and has been in continuous use since long before then. It does not appear on the forest service map, though the trail is popular, very well maintained and is in constant use by bicycles. It begins near the summit of Liebre Mountain at the junction with the Horse Trail Camp double track and 7N23. It parallels 7N23 to the north of the fire road, then crosses 7N23 where it veers close to the boundary of the proposed RW, before crossing 7N23 once again and continuing northwest towards the Historic Sandberg Inn site. Where the trail appears to cross or come close to the proposed boundary is around 34°43'11.43"N 118°40'38.51"W. The RW must be adjusted to exclude this trail, and the process to bring this trail into the FS official trail inventory should be begun. Following is a graphic showing the area of concern.



The fire road to Atmore Meadow (7N19) has been “cherry-stemmed” out of the proposed recommended wilderness, but on the supplied data and maps displayed at the public meetings, it appears that the road does in fact veer across the proposed border and into the RW area at one point. We believe the intention is to exclude these fire roads. Any RW designation’s boundaries must be refined based on current on-the-ground data to be sure to exclude such roads, rather than from surveys and data that may be decades old. The same applies for the access road to Knapp Ranch (7N22), with the road appearing to veer in and out of the proposed RW area in some locations on the supplied maps.

There has been historic use of the Fish Canyon (16W05) and Burnt Peak Canyon (16W02) trails by bicycles as far back as the 1980’s. They are in fact described in great detail in a 1990 guide book to mountain bike trails as a loop southwest on 16W02 from 7N23A, then north on 16W05 to Atmore Meadows. Though our understanding is that these trails are in a dilapidated state and have seen little to no maintenance or use, we are opposed to closing them to bicycles forever with a RW designation. We would prefer to see these two trails retain a Backcountry Non-Motorized designation and be cherry-stemmed out of the RW proposal. We would also like to see more current on-the-ground data regarding the condition of these trails and their viability for

restoration. It is our fear that with a RW designation that no further maintenance will take place and the trails may be lost forever to all users.

We are pleased to see that the most popular bicycle routes along Fish Canyon - Warm Springs fire road (7N22), Warm Springs trail (16W12), Warm Springs Divide (7N13) and the Elderberry Forebay (6N13) will see no changes under the new management plans.

At this time we are not making any comments on the San Bernadino, Cleveland or Los Padres National Forests. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Messer', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Steve Messer

Vice President, CORBA
323-743-3682

About CORBA: The Concerned Off-Road Bicyclists Association (CORBA) is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and a chapter of the International Mountain Bicyclists Association (IMBA). Formed in 1987, CORBA works with land managers and the off-road cycling community at large to foster off-road cycling as a healthy, sustainable outdoor recreation in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. CORBA is dedicated to preserving open space, maintaining public access to public lands, and creating more trail opportunities for all to enjoy. CORBA works with California State Parks, National Park Service, National Forest Service, Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority, Conejo Open Space Agency, as well as other local City and County government agencies. Our Volunteer Trail Crew, Youth Adventures, Free Skills Clinics, CORBA Kids Club and other programs promote off-road cycling recreation, and the responsible use and stewardship of our trails and open spaces.