



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Mormon Lake
Ranger District

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File Code: 1950-1

Date: January 28, 2005

Dear Participant,

Enclosed are the Final Decision Notice and Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Munds Park Roads and Trails Project. Also attached is an Errata Sheet, that when combined with the previously mailed Draft Environmental Assessment (EA), serves as the Final EA for the project. Included with the Final EA are two new appendices, Appendix C, which is a table of the names of those who provided substantive comment during the 30 day EA comment period, which gives them appeal status, and Appendix D, Response to Comments on the Draft EA. I have not re-mailed the draft EA. If you have misplaced yours, or need an additional copy, contact Alvin Brown at (928) 527-8234 or for an electronic copy, go to our website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/nepa/index.shtml#9>

You will see from the Decision Notice that I have selected Alternative A. In my letter of September 23, 2004 that was mailed with the Draft EA for your review and comment, I indicated that I considered Alternative C as the preferred alternative. As you know, Alternatives C and D were new alternatives reflecting input I received during the August 2003 public comment period (i.e. scoping). I was leaning toward Alternative C because it included what I considered to be a compromise that addressed some resident concerns surrounding the proposed Iron Springs trailhead, one motorized and multiple non-motorized trails. It was important for me to hear from residents their perspective on Alternatives C and D since I already received input on Alternatives A and B through scoping. I appreciate the candid and heartfelt input I received. I read all of the input (letters, emails, petition) responding to the Draft EA just as I had with all correspondence received during scoping and through my follow-up letter in February 2004.

Based on the community comments received on the Draft EA, it became clear to me that Alternative C would not be a compromise. After reviewing all comments, I feel the Iron Springs trailhead and motorized trail connection from this trailhead is identified as a crucial component to the overall design of the project. Its location received a lot of discussion through a collaborative process that represents both motorized and non-motorized community residents. The discussion continued into the public involvement processes associated with this environmental analysis. The input I received from community residents led me to conclude a choice between Alternatives A and C as it relates to this trailhead and trails. After consideration of both sides of this issue, I considered our original proposal, Alternative A as being closer to a true compromise with the needs identified to me by community resident's and best meeting the project's purpose and need than either Alternatives C or D. The Decision Notice explains my reasons for my decision to select Alternative A.

My staff and I with many of you, worked to try and develop a proposal that would receive full support of the community. I felt we were successful – most of the Alternative A project activities were accepted and/or supported. The portion of the project generating conflict revolved around the proposed Iron Springs trailhead/motorized trail and implications with the



Janice Place access point. My staff and I spent additional time soliciting and reviewing your input to see if there was another alternative that would address this disagreement and better meet the community needs. I believe Alternative A best meets the community needs though I realize some of you will disagree. It is my hope that once those of you who indicated a preference toward Alternatives C and D have reviewed the updates to the Draft EA and the response to comments, in Appendix D, that you will at least understand my change and the course of action I have chosen. Detailed, large-scale maps of the selected Alternative A will be made available in Munds Park at the Pinewood Fire Department, on the kiosk at the Forest Road 240 Trailhead as well as through the Munds Park Trail Stewards.

We will continue to work with the community in implementing and monitoring the project. I anticipate the project to be implemented over the next 5 to 10 years with trail construction beginning this summer in the Janice Place and Crystal Point areas. Much of the work will be accomplished through the Munds Park Trails Stewards (MUTS). MUTS has been serving the community by providing public education, maintaining the Crystal Point trail, removing fencing, removing noxious weeds, and maintaining trailhead information. In addition to these activities, MUTS provides a critical conduit with the Munds Park community and the Forest Service by seeking and receiving grants/monies and completing project work with volunteers. We sincerely appreciate their assistance and dedication, which allows work to be done quicker and less costly than would allow through traditional Forest Service planning and funding. This collaborative effort is critical to providing and maintaining a quality recreation environment on National Forest System lands immediately adjacent to the community.

My staff will continue to provide project updates and schedules with you on the project. We will immediately coordinate with MUTS to develop and finalize a proposed implementation plan listing each project activities. As you know, MUTS encourages involvement of all members of the community.

Again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have participated in this process. Your comments have been immensely valuable in shaping the project into an undertaking I believe will be highly successful and result in a much-improved recreational environment for the Munds Park community.

For questions regarding the environmental analysis and appeals process, please contact Alvin Brown, at (928) 526-0866 or email at arbrown@fs.fed.us. For questions regarding project implementation and status, please contact Andrew Johnson, at (928) 526-8229 or email at andrewjohnson@fs.fed.us. If you have other questions or comments, please contact me at (928) 774-1147.

Sincerely,

/S/ TERRI MARCERON

TERRI MARCERON
District Ranger