



August 8, 2017

To: Carolyn Eppler

Re: AZSFWC's position on the Tonto NF's Sierra Ancha Wilderness (SAW)

Carolyn, regrettably I will be unable to attend your planned August 22nd meeting with Supervisor Bosworth regarding the discussions on Workman Creek and Cherry Creek Roads. Since I can't be there in person, please accept this letter as our Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation (AZSFWC) position on the matter.

AZSFWC is a 501c-3 organization dedicated to wildlife conservation, habitat work, youth recruitment and retention, as well as educating sportsmen and women on issues important to their passions. We have 34 member organizations and 7 affiliate members that reach across the spectrum of wildlife conservation, hunting, angling and shooting groups, youth orientated groups and outdoor recreation groups and businesses from all across Arizona.

We are a strong proponent of sustainable multi-use on our Federal lands including the Tonto National Forest. Access to the land is one of those critical components that we need to ensure remains in place, because all too frequently by dictum, rule or by some administrative declaration, access becomes restricted. We have way too much of that happening across all our Federal lands!

In the instant matter, the SAW boundaries intersecting Workman Creek Road and Cherry Creek Road should be an easy fix. We are in favor of a 300 foot buffer along the roads for both public and in some cases private access. Where those new lines take away from a wilderness segment that had existed before, we are in favor of a trade commensurate with the acreage taken for lands contiguous with the boundary that contain wilderness like characteristics. If possible, an even trade acreage wise.

We view this issue as an administrative "fix", not an opportunity to add thousands of acres of wilderness to a landscape that already has limited access points.

AZSFWC position letter on the Tonto NF SAW issues – 8-8-2017

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation
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While we appreciate the desire to protect watersheds and riparian areas from off road abuse, we see that as a non-issue on both Workman Creek Road and Cherry Creek Roads. The adjacent country is simply too rugged to lend itself to abusive off road activity. So to that end, we don't believe we need to "fix" or solve a problem that doesn't exist.

We also support the need to maintain access for the Arizona Game & Fish Department, for both administrative purposes as well as active wildlife management. Too often in the past wilderness designations have been an impediment to their statutory responsibilities.

Finally, we support continued access for the ranchers in this country, both for their ongoing maintenance, management and operations on their allotments. Some of these ranchers and their families have been working parcels in that country for decades. An administrative error or oversight from the 1960's should not eliminate them from their livelihood.

If my schedule changes I'll try to join you, however if it doesn't I hope your meeting is fruitful!

Yours in Conservation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Unmacht". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jim Unmacht
Executive Director