

**John F. Bigbee**  
**775 Esslinger Road**  
**La Mesa, New Mexico 88044**

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Ms. Carol McCall  
Community Development Department  
Post Office Box 2000  
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88004

Dear Ms. McCall,

A proposal that additional lands be included in a "wilderness designation" in Doña Ana County is a proposal that will adversely affect many more citizens than you might imagine. As a native New Mexican, with over 70 years experience in soil conservation, livestock grazing, wildlife management, land appraisals and State Trust Land management, I am familiar with the necessity of good land management. Most opposition to increased wilderness designation rises from the painful restrictions on agencies or individuals, especially on the latter who have responsibilities of proper land management. These restrictions in the past have had severe adverse effects on the land, economics, flood and fires control.

If ranchers who now own grazing rights and water rights have their access and management abilities restricted, not only their livestock, but all wildlife inhabiting the grazing lands will suffer. Soil conservation and land improvements are manifestations of unfettered agencies and individuals.

Ranchers whose livelihood depends on good land stewardship are grossly underappreciated particularly for water development and its distribution, which automatically results in tremendous related benefits to wildlife. Ranchers are interested in protecting the land, picking up trash and seeing after livestock and wildlife. If we did not have them, we would need to invent them. It is wrong to tie their hands with the chains of limitations and regulations.

Sincerely

John F. Bigbee

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