

TALKING POINTS FOR CRAFTING LETTERS TO THE CARSON NATIONAL FOREST ON DRAFT FOREST PLAN

BACKGROUND: The forest plan provides strategic direction to guide management of the forest resources and is a framework for decision-making on site-specific projects and activities. The Carson National Forest (CNF) is currently in the process of revising its existing 1986 Forest Plan. Now is the time to comment on the new plan and have a voice in how the forest will be managed for the next 20-30 years!

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD DEADLINE: November 7th, 2019

SEND COMMENTS TO: Carson National Forest

ATTENTION: Forest Plan Revision Process

208 Cruz Alta Road Taos, NM 87571

carsonplan@fs.fed.us

General Guidelines: Tell the Forest Service about your personal experience with the Carson National Forest (CNF). How do you and your family use the forest? Where do you go? What do you see and what do you hope for management over the next 20-30 years? Make the letter as personal as possible and talk about your values, experiences, and hopes for these areas. Be specific in detailing the times, places, and experiences you have had. Document your comments, if you desire, with photos. Keep your letter polite, clear, specific, and to the point.

Consider, using your own voice, integrating the following talking points into your comments:

Wild and Scenic Rivers: Tell the Forest Service you oppose downgrading Wild and Scenic protections in the Carson. The Forest Service is proposing to eliminate the Wild and Scenic eligibility status for 62 river segments on the Carson and is proposing to downgrade the classification or remove outstanding resource values (ORVs) of other eligible rivers. Let the Forest Service know that you are concerned about their new evaluation and that you oppose reversing eligibility and removing protections. Review the list of rivers they are proposing to downgrade and provide river specific comments about why these rivers should remain eligible. Provide information about specific outstanding values that the river has that are exceptional and rare. For example include a description of special geologic features, recreational opportunities or wildlife habitat. The Region of Comparison for the Wildlife Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) is Inappropriately too Large: The state of New Mexico, rather than the entire four corners region is the appropriate region of comparison for wildlife. This would enable Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep and elk wintering/calving areas, which are regionally important to many local communities in New Mexico, to be factored into the evaluation process.



Wetland Jewels: Let the Forest Service know that you support designating the 10 identified Carson Wetland Jewels as Management Areas in the new plan with a focus on protecting and restoring these high priority wetlands.

- Tell the Carson to include a Wetland Jewels Management Area in their proposed alternative (alternative 2) and not just in alternative 4.
- Amigos Bravos and the Western Environmental Law Center have identified and documented 10 wetlands in the Carson that hold important watershed and biodiversity values.
 - **Valle Vidal**
 - **Serpent Lake**
 - **Rio Santa Barbara**
 - **Canjilon Lakes**
 - **Midnight Meadows**
 - **McCrystal Creek**
 - **La Jara Canyon**
 - **Cruces Basin**
 - **Brazos**
 - **Bobcat Pass**
- A Wetland Jewels Management Area would protect critical wetland resources from the impacts from road construction, off road vehicles, and ungulate grazing.
- These areas need to be given special restoration priority, so that the numerous head cuts and other erosion features that are currently draining and drying up these wetlands are addressed and the functions of these critical headwater wetlands are restored.
- Without healthy headwater wetland systems, snow-melt and storm water flow out of the forest all at once, causing floods in the spring and then dry streambeds later in the season.
- Our changing climate will increase the frequency and intensity of both drought and flood events.
- Healthy wetland systems mitigate both of these impacts by soaking up flood waters and substantially augmenting stream flow during dry times.
- Healthy Wetlands provide climate resiliency.
- Emphasize that designation and protection of Wetland Jewel Management Areas are essential to the health and vitality of the entire Carson and to communities that rely on healthy watersheds and clean water.

The Valle Vidal:

- Thank the Forest Service for proposing a Valle Vidal Management Area in their proposed plan as suggested by Amigos Bravos and others. The Valle Vidal, as a special place, deserves its own management directives that are distinct from the rest of the forest and to ensure that the Valle Vidal's unparalleled ecological and social values can contribute to the entire region's health and vitality.
- Ask them to prohibit new construction of motorized trails in the proposed Management Plan. Ask them to require the decommissioning of unauthorized routes.
- Ask them to incorporate the needs of other resources with developing allotment management plans and ensure that allotment management plans facilitate the improvement of the watershed condition.

