



City Manager's Office

102 Roadrunner Dr.
Sedona, AZ 86336

Nov. 2, 2021

RE: City of Sedona Request Regarding Motorized Use Trails

Dear Forest Supervisor for the Coconino National Forest Laura Jo West,

The Sedona Mayor and City Council, on behalf of concerned residents both within City limits and in the nearby rural communities, are requesting that the USFS implement a limited entry permit system for motorized use trails in the greater Sedona area, similar to the permit system implemented at Soldier's Pass. The City acknowledges that no two areas are exactly alike, and each should be assessed and appropriate capacity determined based on its own unique circumstances. Soldier's Pass, for example, currently allows for 12 visitors per day, but that may not be the right threshold for other areas.

Sedona is one of the most beautiful places on earth, and we must protect every acre of this sacred land we have been entrusted with. This unregulated traffic has created substantial environmental damage, health and public safety issues, high fire danger from dead trees, potential harm to the precious heritage sites, and general nuisance issues within residential neighborhoods, such as noise, trash, and odor emissions. The current situation is unsustainable and must be corrected.

The Sedona area has seen an increase in off-road travel in the past few years. As a result, there are negative impacts on natural resources, heritage sites, wildlife, and local residents' quality of life.

Time is of the essence. Restrictions are absolutely necessary to save our beautiful Sedona.

The following are reasons for a limited entry system:

Dust levels and air pollution from traffic on all forest service roads and OHV trails in the affected areas are causing the following environmental damage:

- Dust levels contribute to thousands of dead and dying trees
- Dust levels are damaging to grasslands
- Dust creates air pollution (Clean Air Act must apply)
- Dust levels create zero visibility dust clouds
- Breathing fugitive dust is harmful to humans (local residents and tour operators are at risk)
- Even when vehicles are traveling at speeds as low as 20 mph, dust levels are killing trees, damaging grasslands, and causing dangerous air pollution

Current noise levels:

- Constant noise levels have the potential to cause hearing loss
- Noise levels disturb wildlife
- Noise levels diminish the outdoor experience for all other forest visitors
- Noise levels diminish the quality of life for local residents

Off-trail travel is causing the following environmental damage:

- Damage to native plants
- Compaction of soil
- Erosion

Speeding and Reckless driving is causing the following issue:

- Environmental damage
- Local residents afraid to drive on our own roads
- Forest roads are in poor condition
- Doughnuts cause significant environmental damage
- Ruins the outdoor experience for other forest visitors

OHV accidents are becoming more common:

- Inexperienced drivers may be contributing to a rise in accidents
- OHV accidents are becoming more frequent and more severe
- Some non-injury accidents are not reported, so true accident numbers may be higher than documented

Thank you for the attention the USFS has already given to these issues. The City recognizes that this is a complex issue with no easy solutions. The City also appreciates the tangible progress your team is making with respect to allocating resources to these efforts; hiring a new grant coordinator; your partnership with the Sedona Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau to engage the industry to identify mitigations; engaging Tread Lightly for land preservation and education; and for seeking state grant funding for supplemental education. The City is eager to consider how we might encourage and support this progress in the future, including financially.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Sandra J. Moriarty
City of Sedona Mayor