Logo

Description automatically generated

**TORCA’s Stance on the 2022 Coronado National Forest Trails Plan**

* Samaniego Ridge should not be an option as a top-to-bottom trail in this plan as it is a logistical nightmare to maintain and an irresponsible use of resources with a very low return on investment. An alternate option would be a lower addition to the Red Ridge Trail that avoids the Gap Road and connects to the Upper 50 Year area. Another option would be to utilize the beginning of CDO and Sutherland with a new trail outside of the wilderness boundary down to Upper 50 Year area. Both options would make more sense logistically, financially, and socially as an addition to the mountain for a top-to-bottom trail.
* The new Fireline Trail will be a welcomed (and definitely needed) addition to the mountain's system but needs to be signed as a “mountain bike only” downhill directional trail. This is necessary to help avoid unsafe user interactions and conflicts on a trail with a topography that lends itself to high speeds and possible sightline issues. Additionally, it will give mountain bikers a reason to avoid other congested areas of the mountain and the confidence to ride freely without fear of possible unsafe interactions with other trail users. We don’t want a newly built trail to have the same issues as an older, heavily used trails like Aspen Draw currently does.
* The Bigelow to Fireline connector will make a great multi-use addition to the area as a beginner/ intermediate trail which can be looped through use of Bigelow Road or other trails in the area. This will help spread users, offer a better variety of trail level to the upper part of the mountains trail system, and give people who camp on Bigelow another option to recreate in proximity to their camps.
* Bug Jr. (and its adjoining connector trails to Gordon Hirabayashi) have the possibility to be a great addition to the trail system of the mountain with proper signage and layout in line with its original description of being a downhill directional trail. The current trail profile would make it less desirable to mountain bikers and would be a hard sell to a community wanting more mountain bike specific trails.
* We are very excited to have both the Golder/50 Year trails area and La Milagrosa adopted into the CNF. Both are signature trails to Tucson and its outdoor community and are even well known on a national level. Adoption will allow partners of the CNF like TORCA to legitimately work on the trails and help with erosion mitigation, sustainability, and provide a better overall experience.
* The organization is happy that the FS has included the Vista Trail in this plan, as it is a variation of a concept submitted 3-4 years ago by TORCA. This trail adds roughly 8 mi of new trail, while also linking many existing trails from Sunset all the way to Lower Green Mountain. This will help to both spread out users in a popular part of the mountain and provide new experiences for seasoned and newer outdoor recreationalists. We are also pleased at the investment in updated and expanded facilities at various stages of the Vista, including the entirety of the Palisades area/ trails, as well as the inclusion of more parking which is desperately needed throughout the entire mountain.
* Because of the 10% overall expansion cap and the unknown status of the environmental survey yet to be performed, we feel that the FS should have a queue of backup projects in case something on the current plan is unable to be executed. This way the plan can continue to have a net gain of 10% growth overall without anything having to be sacrificed at a loss to the mountain and the public.
* We would like to offer the idea of a connector trail that would span between Guthrie peak to the top of the initial Bug Spring hike-a-bike. This would help create a loopable portion of trail which could be accessed from either the General Hitchcock campground or the Upper Bug Spring parking lot trailhead. It would help provide an alternate route to avoid the campground, highway, and subsequent hike-a-bike when connecting the Green Mountain trail and Bug Spring. This would give outdoor users a continuous experience while doing the “Lemmon Drop” and offering a new section of trail through a very scenic area of the Catalinas. When posed to various people in the outdoor community, the initial response was overwhelmingly positive and welcomed, and we think this could be a special piece of trail that offers a bit of the backcountry experience while being entirely accessible.