

# Opinion

If one attended the January and February Cornville Community Association meetings, one would have heard pro and con presentations regarding a "National Scenic Area" (NSA) designation of 160,000 acres of National Forest land in and around Sedona.

Barbara Litrell presented (January 10, 2007) on behalf of Keep Sedona Beautiful and requested that the Cornville Community Association support the proposed designation. Copies of the proposed legislation drafted by the offices of Senator McCain and Congressman Renzi with input from the Red Rock National Scenic Area task force and Keep Sedona Beautiful are available from Keep Sedona Beautiful. Barbara explained that this designation requires an Act of Congress to become a reality. She noted that this designation would in summary:

- Make a statement about a "sense of place"
  - Permanently address the land trade issue
  - Serve as a catalyst for obtaining grants for partnership projects with the USFS
  - Complete the process begun in the early 1990's (Amendment 12)
  - Keeps current administration in place

Ms. Litrell listed the unique characteristics of our 160,000 acres as:

- Plants, wildlife, soil & water/ecosystem
- Red rock landscape/scenic values
- Prehistoric and historic archaeology
- Wilderness - 1/3 of our area

And listed supporters of the Bill as:

- Yavapai and Coconino County Supervisors
- City Council of Sedona
- Big Park Regional Coordination Council
- Red Rock - Dry Creed Community Plan Committee
- Sierra Club - Grand Canyon Chapter
- 3000 support statements have been signed and sent to Keep Sedona Beautiful

Then on February 14, 2007 Ron Volkman with Sedona 30 and Citizens for an Alternative Route in Sedona responded with an opposing view. He voiced that Amendment 12, already in place prohibits land trades and that 160,000-acre proposal includes more land than a combination of all seven of the existing National Scenic areas. He also noted that this is the third proposal by Keep Sedona Beautiful to accomplish this goal. Mr. Volkman sited four major points of his opposition:

- Local control would be lost
- Forest Service administrators would have problems with the NSA designation
- Special interest groups would use the NSA designation to stop future alternate route planning and implementation
- It would tie the hands of future generations in regards to the use the land

After hearing each side and as a resident of the Verde Valley I also have an opinion on this matter. I see this as one of two ways to inhibit growth in the Verde Valley. Protection and restrictions of land use is one way, with tight "new construction" building codes being the other. If they want to build it here it must be on our terms (decided by vote). And these building regulations must be "green", "water sensitive" and "environmentally friendly."

Addressing the alternative route issue, I see no need to increase traffic in residential and scenic areas merely for the easy of cross-town traffic. We need to look long term and look at the overall impact such changes would make to the place we all call home. As for the "safety issue", members of the Cornville Fire Department were in attendance and stated in their presentation that it is common for emergency vehicles to use roads and passes that are exclusive to them and undetected by the general public. Perhaps this system could be used in areas with safety issues.

And as far as "tying the hands of future generations", I'm glad that this wasn't an issue for Teddy Roosevelt when he established the National Park designation, Nature Preserves and the National Forest Service.

So, when the Cornville Community Association calls for the vote on this issue, I'll take the change to designate the area. That's my two cents.

Patti Marrs  
Cornville Resident

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