

Pryor Mountains BLM Travel Plan EA Comment Guide

4 Tips for Writing Effective Comments

1. Identify yourself Begin with an introduction of yourself. Use a simple statement, such as "I am a third-grade teacher at _____ elementary school" or "I am an avid member of the Sunday Hikers Club...."

2. Make it personal Making connections between parts of the draft plan and how they would affect you personally can be powerful. Avoid copying and pasting information. Rather, take the information provided by MWA and frame it around your own knowledge and experience to inform the BLM. For example, "I've spent years hiking around Bear Canyon and know the area well, and I think Pygmy Panther Trail should be just for hikers and hoofstock to make sure there aren't user conflicts between all the different people who want to enjoy the area."

3. Be specific Specific information is much more helpful than general statements of support or opposition. The comment process is not a vote. The most effective comments are those that adequately explain the reasoning behind your position. What do you disagree with? What do you think the BLM missed or overlooked? What do you agree with? What do you think is important to carry forward?

4. Be polite These comments will be read by career federal BLM workers who live and work in our communities. Advocacy may be inherently confrontational, but it does not need to be divisive, threatening, rude, or make personal attacks. In fact, the most effective advocacy does not resort to such tactics.

Specific Talking Points

Include some of the following points in your comments, using your own words.

1. Quiet recreation like hiking and horseback riding are valuable ways the public visits the Pryors, and we appreciate the FO recognizing these important activities.

2. Signage and maps will make the Pryors safer and more equitable for all public land visitors. Clear signage will also ensure unauthorized activity does not take place where it is not supposed to (i.e., clearly mark roads that are closed or limited to prevent unauthorized use).

3. The plan needs site specific analysis for which uses are suitable where (as travel planning intends), not a blanket approach to allow e-bikes on all bike trails regardless of conditions on the ground, as Order 3376 does.

4. Based on site specific considerations, we propose:

- Pygmy Panther Trail should be hiking and hoofstock only since it parallels Bear Canyon Road, creating an opportunity to provide separation between wheeled and non-wheeled users of the popular area.
- Demijohn Flat Trail should be hiking and hoofstock only to limit access to the sensitive and special cultural resources, and maintain the appropriate social settings of the site.
- Bent Springs Road and PM 1134 are redundant routes to Miller Trail, and also are not physically passable as a loop by wheeled vehicles. They should both be closed and recognized as hiking and hoofstock only.

5. Decommission the redundant “loops” on Sykes Ridge Road because they are redundant, interfere with the wilderness characteristics of the surrounding WSA lands, and create administrative burdens.

6. The plan needs strong monitoring language to study the impact of e-bikes in the Pryors and needs to adapt management as necessary to protect the primitive values of the landscape.

7. The plan also needs language that specifically calls for cooperation and coordination between the FS and the BLM on the issue of e-bikes, because many routes, trails, and recreational opportunities cross agency boundaries, which could lead to user confusion and ineffective enforcement by both agencies.