

Hunting and Wilderness

The Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness Proposal

A Quality Hunting Experience

The Tumacacori Highlands, within Region V's hunt unit 36B, are rated by the Arizona Game and Fish Department as "Excellent" for white-tailed deer hunting. Mearns' quail, Gambel's quail, dove, mule deer, javelina, and cottontail rabbit are other common game species found in this diverse area, which supports a collection of species from four distinct ecosystems – the Rocky Mountains, Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts. This rich and remote landscape, because of its primitive nature and roadless condition, offers hunters unique opportunities to experience hunting in a traditional manner that is now rare in Arizona.

The Threat

Pima County – indeed, Arizona – is growing exponentially. With an increasing population and growing demand for outdoor recreation, off road vehicle use is the greatest and most pressing threat to this pristine remnant of the American West. Roads created by off-road vehicle trails cause habitat damage, erosion, and disturb wildlife. Both the quality of the landscape, the quality of the hunt, and a hunter's feeling of solitude are adversely affected.

About the Proposal

The Tumacacori Highlands are the largest remaining unprotected Forest Service roadless area in Arizona. H.R. 3287, introduced in 2007 by Rep. Raul Grijalva, is a proposal to congressionally-designate approximately 80,000 acres of Coronado National Forest as wilderness, the highest level of protection for public lands. This proposal does not stop Homeland Security or Border Patrol from performing their duty, and allows local ranchers to continue their livelihood in cattle ranching. The purpose of the proposal is to ensure that the Tumacacori Highlands *remains as it is* for future generations.

Why should Hunters support Wilderness for the Tumacacori Highlands?

Wilderness areas not only foster exceptional habitat, but also provide the American public with areas free of human influence and offer exceptional recreational opportunities, including hunting. Under Federal and State law, all forms of hunting are allowed in Wilderness Areas. This is your chance to preserve for yourself, and your children, a quality hunting ground where you can still experience Arizona as Arizona used to be.

Supporters for Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness include the Arizona Game and Fish Department, National Wildlife Federation, Arizona Wildlife Federation, Backcountry Anglers and Hunters and the Arizona Quail Alliance, as well a growing number of local and regional Arizona hunters.



Photo by Thomas Veneklasen

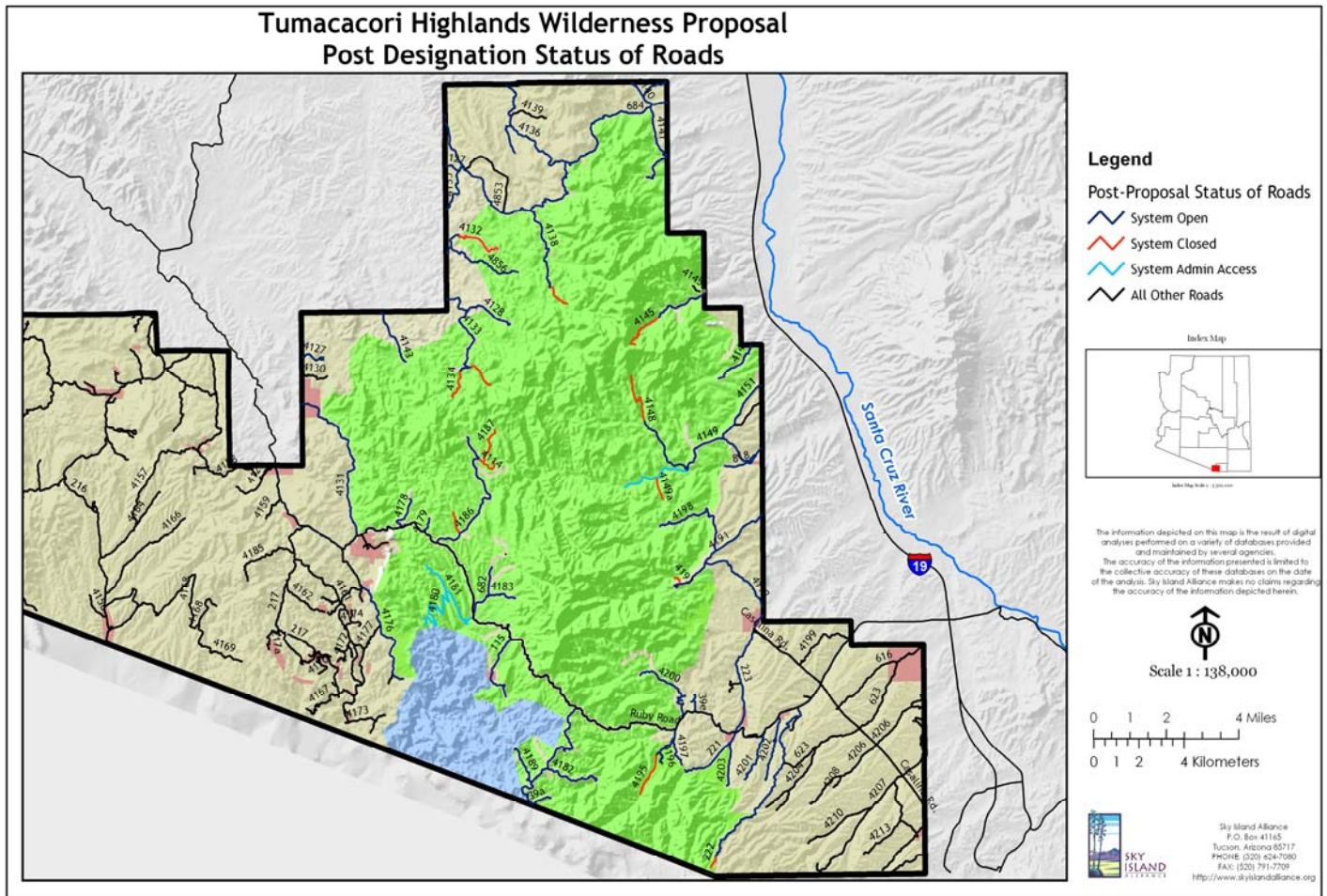
“As a hunter, health of the habitat and well-being of game are my top priorities. Wilderness not only provides the best wildlife habitat, but also offers the finest, purest hunting experience. Only beyond the sound of truck and ATV engines can I feel that I am a part of the chain of life, and not just some observer on a noisy perimeter. As Arizona's human population continues to expand, it becomes ever more vital that we protect the remaining gems in our natural heritage. Whether I am hunting or not, I cherish the chance to experience these bits of the real Arizona — a land of silence and space and nature unspoiled by pavement and steel.”

Jonathan Hanson

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Access and Dispersed Camping

Sky Island Alliance and the Arizona Game and Fish Department have worked with local hunters to assure that access is maintained in the proposed wilderness. The majority of Forest Service system roads will remain open after wilderness designation, and access to dispersed camping sites will continue to be accessible by vehicle. The most significant change will be that traditional methods of hunting will replace off-road vehicle use, allowing hunters to scout, hunt and retrieve game by foot, mule, horse or other non-vehicle means, improving the quality of game, habitat, and the hunting experience. Details on these proposed road changes are available at www.tumacacoriwild.org/access.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Sky Island Alliance is a grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and restoration of the rich natural heritage of native species and habitats in the Sky Island region of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. Learn more at www.skyislandalliance.org.

