



Flagstaff Biking Organization  
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February 7, 2013

Vanessa Hickman, Land Commissioner  
State Land Department  
1616 W. Adams Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Commissioner Hickman,

I am writing in support of the reclassification of State Trust land sections 6, 8, 12, 18, and 19 on Observatory Mesa in Flagstaff as suitable for conservation purposes.

Flagstaff Biking Organization (FBO) is a group of cyclists who came together to “promote bicycling as a safe and attractive means of transportation and recreation in Northern Arizona.” Our initial project was to put on a Bike to Work Week for our community in May 2002. Building on the success we started to expand our efforts to keep people informed of cycling related issues and galvanize support for better and safer facilities, trails, and trail access. Currently we have well over 200 paid members and represent the interests of Flagstaff’s thousands of cyclists. Please see <http://flagstaffbiking.org/about-fbo/> for more information.

Preserving these Trust Lands at the western edge of the city for conservation purposes and open space has many benefits, including ecological, economical, and recreational. Flagstaff Biking Organization and our members greatly value the opportunities for access that Open Space provides. Observatory Mesa is ripe for potential additions of multi-use non-motorized trails. Protection of this area from development would potentially allow for additions of connectors and loop trails from the nearby Flagstaff Urban Trail System and Flagstaff Loop Trail to the surrounding Coconino National Forest. Most Flagstaff citizens value the access that trails provide to the outdoors in our community.

Observatory Mesa was initially recognized for its open space and resource values in 1998 when the Flagstaff Open Space and Greenways Plan (OSGP) identified it as one of the first priority

areas for retention located on state trust lands. Following the OSGP recommendation, the 2001 Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan, adopted by the City of Flagstaff and Coconino County and ratified by the voters, set forth land use policies that demonstrated the community's desire to preserve and protect the outstanding resource values associated with first priority areas for retention in the plan's Open Space, Parks, Recreation & Trails Element.

The petition recently submitted by the City of Flagstaff seeking reclassification of state trust lands at Observatory Mesa is consistent with the above stated land use plans. Therefore, Flagstaff Biking Organization strongly supports this reclassification and the subsequent City acquisition of Observatory Mesa through the Arizona Preserve Initiative and Growing Smarter Grant process.

Sincerely,

*s/Anthony Quintile*

for the Board of Flagstaff Biking Organization