Appendix D

Summary of Public Comments

ISSUES IDENTIFIED AT SOCORRO/SIERRA CITY COMMISSION MEETINGS:

- Hunting
- Access from I-25 Rest Area(s)
- Erosion
- Access to river
- Safety with vehicles and livestock
- Air, Water, and Dust
- Septic systems
- Widening of Socorro County Road 255

SOCORRO PUBLIC MEETING 4/5/00

- Proposed opening date?
- What is status of 11,000 acres described in paper?
- Identify communities where settlers settled, like Paraje, etc (in area of center).
- Are 175 jobs at center or service?
- Correlation of project with BOR RMP?
- Not satisfied with answer on 11,000 acre withdrawal
- How do we know if input from public scoping meetings will affect decisions?
- Trails do not sustain "pristineness"
- BOR maps show state park going north of site toward Black Mesa.

T OR C PUBLIC MEETING 4/6/00
AGENDA

INTRODUCTION
OPENING REMARKS
SCOPING PROCESS
RECREATION & PUBLIC PURPOSE APPLICATION (R&PP)
HISTORY
SITE SELECTION
BUILDING
PUBLIC COMMENTS

T OR C SCOPING MEETING

- Government is checking on us; we are losing our sovereignty
- Historic marker between T or C and Las Cruces on east side; check into where the trail started. "I was at the site when the Spanish were here; need to think about its significance".

- 3-mile road to site: will it be paved to center?
- Want to see the site; schedule a tour
- There are good artists in Sierra Co.-- use their expertise
- Highway traffic wanted; transport people to the area, closer to trail visitation
- Exhibits - women are significant players; will they be represented?
- Is there access from Rest Stop?
- After all bugs are worked out, want it to be a regional facility.
- The 11,000-acre viewshed: is it going to be restricted?
- Want a stipulation that BLM acquire (sic) only 125 acres
- What a fabulous project! – agrees with title "International"
- (speaking as private citizen): "cumulative impact of Federal actions; there is nothing keeping the owner from erecting signs to destroy the view; recommends dealing with private land owner to keep views on private lands; wants to enjoy historic trails by walking on them.
- Have trails to actual historic trails; how to have the visitor really be there?
- Site-views: project does nothing to protect the trails and the vistas.
- Examine alternatives for protecting views from development on private lands.
- "missed the directions of the site; spot does not have anything to do with site; not showing the way it was; should have been put on the King's Highway.
- People in charge of project assure us that 125 acres are the limit (but is skeptical)
- Does not buy explanation (of the "11,000 acre" mineral withdrawal) in Kate Padilla's letter.
- More public meetings – more veracity from public officials.
- Land issues: endangered species (wants BLM/State to stay away from Endangered Species Act and related issues).
- Who are the "private funders?"
- The BOR is not cooperating with the County – praised BLM for being willing to cooperate.
- Spell out jobs criteria for estimating 175 jobs.
- "Wagon road grants": will it be maintained and handled by State only?
- Don't limit future uses.

- How was 106,000 visitors per year estimated?
- $10M gross receipts: where is it coming from?
- commented BLM is doing a good job. What is the real acreage? Decision making policy requesting feedback
- No further withdrawal of public land; wants Sierra County to be joint lead; support heritage center; supports management of project handled under State control.
- Define the actual acreage being considered
- Wants feedback on process
- No more than 125 acres
- Trail - Gadsden purchase. State: Governor and legislature to cede trail to State of NM.
- Wants congress to ask for and demand legal title to the land.
- Is it classified as "mineral land?"
- Wants mineral prospecting to continue
- Does not want "international heritage," only "heritage" center; Old Forts: once a military installation, should be reverted to the State; What is current classification of the land? (People) thought land was not productive but it was. No land withdrawn: what criteria did you use for clarifying jobs?
- does not want the word "International." How did you come up with 106,000 visitors per year? What is the total investment?

Compiled from letters and narrative forms submitted in response to scoping.
(Commentors were given the option to have their names withheld, and those are indicated by number.)

EL CAMINO REAL HERITAGE CENTER COMMENTS

El Camino Real (ECR) Heritage Center (HC

Commentor Name or Code Number:	Comments:	Add to Mailing List	Do Not Add to List
Commentor 1	I sincerely believe that BLM has no business, or any other entity, in allowing the 11,000 acres to be preserved for International HC; U.S.A. maybe, but not international. Why does it include the river or Elephant Butte Lake water or land? Why do they even need 125 acres?	X	
Commentor 2	Issues: 1) Whether hunting will be compatible with proposed use as HC; 2) Whether livestock grazing, if permitted, will present a hazard, to visitors driving to HC; 3) whether restaurant at HC will negatively impact area businesses; 4) whether HC "viewshed" will have any effect on potentially unforeseen activities related to silvery minnow or southwestern willow flycatcher preservation efforts.	X	
Commentor 3	A. The cumulative impacts of other federal actions in vicinity of proposed land transfer and building site should be considered. Mr. Carroll mentioned that BLM was getting information from BOR and implied that cumulative impacts were to be examined. B. Protection of the views from proposed land transfer and building site: it was stated that the site selected in part due to the sweeping vistas it presents and that the design of the building takes into account these views. However, the EA Fact sheet distributed at the meeting specifically states that land in private ownership is not a part of the study. Since the actual El Camino (EC) Real near the proposed site is located on private property and the views that the site and building design want to maximize include significant land in private ownership, some protection of these private lands is necessary to complete and compliment the land transfer and building under consideration. My recommendation is to include these private lands in the EA, specifically to examine options for preserving these essential views from the proposed land and building. Suggestions for preserving the views include a view easement, voluntary non-development (or restrictive development) agreement with the owner to outright purchase of the property.		X
Commentor 4	I am extremely disappointed at the appearance of the building and the (Mr. Sabitini's) statements: "not Santa Fe style; no, it's not even New Mexican";" building should last 50-100 years, no, it should last longer than that"– "think European buildings, "not a monument"; no, not memorable in any way" though the building may work in the interior design, it is plain ugly on the outside. It does not reflect anything to do with the EC Real or the heritage of the people who traveled it. Does it blend into the surrounding terrain? It certainly has no appeal for a tourist's standpoint or esthetically.		X

EL CAMINO REAL HERITAGE CENTER COMMENTS

El Camino Real (ECR) Heritage Center (HC

Commentor Name or Code Number:	Comments:	Add to Mailing List	Do Not Add to List
Commentor 4 continued	Put a picture of this place on promotional material? Better not! Sabatini's comment about the web-the-future is totally out of place. We're talking history here; doesn't he get it? Awful! Awful! Awful! Hope building can be revised. I am very impressed at all the work that went into this project; good planning and getting public response. Great idea!		
Belen, NM 87002	The research you have done previously made for an interesting night of important information. You have done a thorough job and will continue to do so. I am all in favor of this project as I realize the importance of tourism and economic development, as it relates to NM culture	X	
Luis Lopez, NM	I support this project on 125 aces only. I totally oppose it if you withdraw an additional 11,000 acres for your "viewshed". It is totally hypocritical to think it can remain "pristine" with trails all Along the lake and countryside. What consideration has been given to Elephant Butte/Caballo RMP? I oppose setting up new bird watching areas because of the proximity to Bosque Refuge.	x	
Second Submission	Additional comments in interest of bettering economics in Sierra and Socorro counties: I support the withdrawal of 125 acres for purpose of the ECR but only 125 acres. I do not support additional withdrawal of 11,000 acres for purpose of a "360-degree panorama of undeveloped landscape in seemingly unchanged appearance since the time of Onate", or if your true intent is to maintain "the site in a pristine environment devoid of any modern intrusions", then I believe the reason it has remained as pristine as it now is, Is as the permittee's grazing land. There is no way that planned trails and further human intrusion as a result of your HC will keep the land in a "pristine state". The additional withdrawal of 11,000 acres of land would effectively remove this additional public land from traditional current uses of hunters, fishermen, rock hunters, hikers, and others who enjoy our outdoors for many reasons. I oppose any additional withdrawal over 125 acres.		
	BLM grazing permittees should be advised of any change in use proposed for their permitted acres In time to comment on impact to them. The view of the trail should be protected in a way to continue historical land uses.	X	

– Continue – Sincerely . . . .

EL CAMINO REAL HERITAGE CENTER COMMENTS

El Camino Real (ECR) Heritage Center (HC

Commentor Name or Code Number:	Comments:	Add to Mailing List	Do Not Add to List
Bosque, NM	I think the ECR HC is a wonderful concept and hope construction occurs on schedule. As President of Middle Rio Grande Back Country Horsemen, I am particularly interested in the proposed 10-mile equestrian trail. I am a 27-year member of Back Country horsemen of America and have volunteered thousands of hours on trails, trail heads, badges, lookouts, and other Back Country structures. I would like to be actively involved in the planning and implementation of the proposed trail. Also, as_____horseman, cowboy, and _____, I want to be involved in the livestock portion of the center.	X	
T or C, NM	I believe this to be the most significant regional project on our desks to date. The economic impact through tourism will be long-term and business opportunities will soon follow. Understanding our pasts better prepares us for the future. The HC has my full support.	X	
Bosque Farms, NM	No comments	X	
Socorro	A great project		
Socorro, NM	I was among the voters that turned down funding for the HC since I believe the money could be put to better uses (such as giving me a tax break, road improvements in the county, etc.). I also doubt that the HC would "generate about 175 new jobs in service related industries" since the anticipated "106,000 visitors per year would most likely be in the area to visit other sites and activities such as the Bosque del Apache, the Crane Festival, etc. I also suspect that the additional gross receipts taxes of approximately $10 million generated by the HC again will be too high, again for the reason stated above. I also doubt the wisdom of building the HC when Belen and Los Lunas have competing sites in the works. In conclusion, I believe that the ECR will not generate the anticipated benefits and would waste money to duplicate something being done elsewhere in the area.		

EL CAMINO REAL HERITAGE CENTER COMMENTS

El Camino Real (ECR) Heritage Center (HC

Commentor Name or Code Number:	Comments:	Add to Mailing List	Do Not Add to List
T or C, NM	The Sierra County Board of Commissioners have adopted the following position on the ECR HC: 1) We urge no further studies of withdrawal of any public or private land other than the original 125 acres proposed for the ECR HC. 2) We support the HC as originally proposed. 3) Sierra County has requested joint lead agency. 4) jSierra County supports the management of the project be handled under state control.		
Las Cruces, NM	1) Not interested in development unless causes trespass onto Aramendaris 2) No problem with viewing of _____from the Center. 3) Re: scenic easement: Ranch operated as conservation and no likelihood of development, so spending $ to acquire scenic easement not necessary. The members of the Southwest Consolidated Sportsmen support the ECR HC project.		