



February 17, 2021

Traffic Matters, Action Committee for Oak Creek Canyon
Marcie Ellis, Chair
Jerry Showalter, Vice Chair
251 Lower Indian Gardens
Sedona, AZ 86336

Committee Members and all Interested Parties,

In the Oak Creek Watershed, recreational impacts can harm water quality, wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty. These impacts not only threaten the fragile riparian ecosystem but residents' natural resources and quality of life. Recently, Oak Creek Canyon has seen substantial visitation that current resources cannot safely accommodate. It is a collaborative effort to protect the Oak Creek Watershed. We are writing to support a capacity study that will provide land managers, stakeholders, and residents with information to lead our efforts in protecting Oak Creek Canyon.

The Oak Creek Watershed Council is working with multiple partners to identify how recreation impacts the riparian environment. We know that the number of vehicles and persons that can safely and responsibly enjoy recreating in Oak Creek Canyon needs to be further understood. Therefore, we fully support a capacity study that will help continue our efforts to protect Oak Creek and the habitat it supports while improving safety, traffic, and quality of life concerns.

To date, the Oak Creek Watershed Council and our partners have kept over 55,000 pounds of trash and pet waste from entering Oak Creek. Our organization has engaged hundreds of volunteers and educated thousands of residents and visitors on environmental stewardship. And with the support of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, United States Forest Service, National Forest Foundation, the Sedona Chamber of Commerce, the city of Sedona, Slide Rock State Park, and many other partners, OCWC has already collected crucial visitor-use information, recreation ecology data, and water quality data. Our boots-on-the-ground stewardship has positively impacted Oak Creek and residents alike through several programs. However, we feel that the growing visitation to Sedona and surrounding areas must be addressed. Additional research stemming from a capacity study will lead to future improvement actions to effectively mitigate ecological, traffic, and safety concerns from visitation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kalai Kollus".

Kalai Kollus
Executive Director, Oak Creek Watershed Council