

December 7, 2010



Flagstaff Biking Organization
PO Box 23851
Flagstaff, AZ 86002

Yewah Lau
Coconino National Forest
Attn: Plan Revision
1824 South Thompson Street
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001
Sent via electronic mail

Dear Ms. Lau,

Background on Flagstaff Biking Organization

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. Please see <http://flagstaffbiking.org/about-fbo/> for more information.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed revisions to the Coconino National Forest Management plan. Attached are redlined versions of the Dispersed Recreation, Special Use Recreation, and Motorized Recreation drafts.

Management Areas

FBO (Flagstaff Biking Organization) suggests that a special management area be designated for Mount Elden, Dry Lake Hills, and Fort Valley in order to address the high levels of recreation already occurring in this area. By executing an over-arching analysis of resources in this area, the foundation for more streamlined future decisions for building and/or relocating recreational trails would be set.

Other possible management areas could include:

- 1) “Kendrick,” roughly northwest of FR418, west of FR151, north of I-40, west of Highway 89, west to Kaibab NF.

- 2) "Cinders," roughly east of FR420, north of I-40, north of FR556
- 3) "Peaks," roughly within FR418, FR151, FR420, FS6273& FR522, Arizona Trail.

Boundaries noted above are for example only; a closer, more detailed review of maps is required to establish actual boundaries.

Dispersed Recreation

Desired Conditions

Freeride/Downhill trails

Flagstaff Biking Organization is extremely pleased to see language in support of freeride/downhill mountain bike trails included in the draft that we received at the initial recreation workshop! This aspect of mountain biking has become a substantial part of the sport. Unfortunately this demand has exhibited itself to date in the proliferation of user created trails throughout the Forest.

We are strongly in favor of various means of addressing this demand legally, including dispersed trails that may be directional and include challenging features. It is important to note that although this type of riding may at first glance seem to appeal to a small sub-set of “extreme” riders, in fact, when appropriately geared to broad skill levels, this aspect of mountain biking appeals to most riders. In particular, gravity driven mountain biking also appeals to younger riders. Similar to BMX, this segment of cycling has a “cool factor” that drives kids to this healthy lifestyle. Working towards incorporating this type of trail into the local system could be helpful in achieving goals set forth in the Forest Service’s “More Kids in the Woods” program.

Please continue to include this language in subsequent drafts and the final Plan.

Multiple-use trail experience diversity

The Coconino National Forest seems to be taking the direction to maintain all trails to a *de facto* Trail Classification 3 standard or higher. Although we are not aware of any formal direction within the existing plan to do this in a wholesale fashion, such language may exist; we know that some more recent NEPA Analysis, the Flagstaff Loop Trail Categorical Exclusion in particular, does contain such direction.

Although Trail Classification 3 is an appropriate standard for the majority of multiple use trails throughout the Forest, a significant need for more traditionally challenging trails exists separate from the freeride/downhill style trails mentioned above. These trails differ from freeride/downhill trails in their lack of directionality and lesser grades, and appeal to hikers, equestrians, and where appropriate, motorcyclists.

It is appropriate to provide for much easier trails in the front country to allow for those of lesser ability to access the Forest, it is appropriate to provide for more challenging trails in the backcountry, or more remote, trails to provide a challenge for those with advanced riding or hiking abilities. We would like to see direction in the Plan allowing for the use of Trail Classifications 2 and 1 to be implemented, as appropriate, to address the demand for more challenging adventure opportunities. New trail planning should also address the need for much easier Trail Classification 4 routes, as well.

Lack of focus on Mountain Biking in the Red Rock Management Areas

Over the past decade, the Sedona area has emerged as a worldwide destination for mountain biking. Recent high-profile press presence for the Sedona area trails in Bike Magazine, Mountain Bike, and other popular mountain bike enthusiast magazines highlight the fact the Sedona area is popular, and growing in popularity, with the mountain bike community.

This popularity has been thrust somewhat upon the Red Rock District of the Coconino NF. We recognize the diverse, if not divergent, demands placed upon this exceedingly popular area create significant management challenges. We stress that mountain biking is an important and valid activity upon the Red Rock District that requires management direction in order to facilitate responsible use.

We would like to see more specific direction incorporating some of the above-mentioned themes for challenging trails. We would like to see incorporation of mountain biking generally and freeride/downhill riding specifically into the management area specific language for the Red Rock District. Any form of recreation that is not reasonably planned for will continue to occur with insufficient management, which has significantly more impact than well planned and managed recreation.

Recreation Special Uses

Mountain Bike Outfitter/guides

The Flagstaff Lake Mary Ecosystem Amendment placed an undue requirement on the District to execute an analysis determining the local ecosystem's ability to bear outfitter/guide use. We feel that this was overly cumbersome and that the District Ranger should be allowed to issue permits on a case-by-case basis, with public input, as demand and ability to deal with that demand presents itself.

Lift assisted mountain biking at Arizona Snowbowl

An unfortunate byproduct of the drawn out litigation process of the Snowbowl Upgrade Decision has been the inability of the USFS and Snowbowl to consider adding lift-assisted mountain bike trails to the Snowbowl Resort.

Currently, there is legislation that has passed the House of Representatives and is before the Senate, the Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act, which would facilitate other uses of ski areas besides winter sports. (H.R. 2476, S.607)

As is evidenced by an informal petition that Flagstaff Biking Organization set up, there is high demand for this facility. Our petition is currently in excess of 1800 signatures. The wording of our petition is as follows:

"BRING DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING TO SNOWBOWL!

We, the under-signed, propose that the Arizona Snowbowl Ski Resort and Coconino National Forest implement a downhill mountain bike park at the Arizona Snowbowl Ski Area.

We feel that this park could be a benefit to the Coconino National Forest, Arizona Snowbowl, the regional cycling community and the Flagstaff economy. Focusing this use in an already developed, lift-assisted area would alleviate the impacts of dispersed downhill mountain biking to the landscape, wildlife and some roads in the Coconino National Forest. A park that is built to appeal to all levels of riders, from extreme athletes to casual cyclists and families, would benefit the summer tourism economy for both the Arizona Snowbowl and Flagstaff in general. In addition, a facility such as this would benefit the many cycling enthusiasts who reside in Flagstaff and surrounding communities.

We also offer our time and energy in any way possible to assist in the execution and planning of this proposal.

Please consider this show of support.”

We would like to see language in the revised Plan that calls for using opportunities such as the one that the Arizona Snowbowl presents to focus appropriate recreational opportunities to already highly impacted areas with appropriate facilities and features.

Special / competitive events

There is a high demand for the Coconino NF to host various competitive events. We would like the plan to reflect the acceptability of these activities. If there are management areas that are particularly suited to this type of activity, the plan should mention this.

The development of an area specifically to address the need for a competitive event venue has been discussed informally in the past. Language to facilitate this could be included in the new Plan in order to ease the facilitation of this.

In particular, the Red Rock Management Area has been *de facto* host to several “underground” events without Forest Service permission. We in no way condone this, but as currently managed, there exist no channels for obtaining appropriate permits for competitive events, such as mountain bike races, or large group activities, such as guided rides as part of a mountain bike festival. Once again, we recognize the diverse, if not divergent, demands placed upon this exceedingly popular area create significant management challenges, but we feel that competitive and/or large group events are appropriate within the Red Rock area, and that a significant need for the Forest to be able to host such events exists. Please consider updating the Forest direction for this area to include these uses.

“Tracked Changes” to documents distributed at the workshops

Please consider the attached documents, below, for specific changes and suggestions for direction in the new Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Given the short time period for this initial comment phase that included the Thanksgiving holiday, some of our recommended changes may not be accompanied by appropriate explanation. Please contact us if you have any questions regarding the input we have provided via email or phone (928) 526-7704. Please include us on any further action on these proposals via email: anthony@flagstaffbiking.org, and via US mail at Flagstaff Biking Organization, PO Box 23851, Flagstaff, AZ 86002.

Regards,

s/Anthony Quintile

For the Board of Flagstaff Biking Organization

Attachments:

- 1) Dispersed Recreation, redlined
- 2) Special Uses Recreation, redlined
- 3) Motorized Recreation, redlined

Attachment 1

Coconino National Forest Plan Revision

Dispersed Recreation

Forest-wide Direction

Background and Description

Dispersed recreation are those activities that take place outside of developed camping or concessionaire-operated facilities, excluding motorized recreation. This may include dispersed camping in designated sites or corridors that lack substantial improvements.

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The diverse landscapes of the Coconino National Forest (NF) offer a variety of settings for a broad range of recreational opportunities in all seasons and in quiet, natural places. Landscapes range from primitive settings that provide opportunities for solitude, to more developed, rustic settings that provide opportunities for social interaction and greater human comforts.

Desired Condition

Recreation opportunities exist for people with a variety of abilities. Although development and population in the region continue to grow, dispersed recreation settings are stable, retaining their natural character, including remote, undeveloped settings.

Recreation activities create minimal user conflicts.

The Coconino NF fulfills a unique and vital role as a place of learning and caring about the environment.

Growing demand for recreation is accommodated within the capacity of the land to support it. Recreation use stays within this capacity with the exception of higher holiday and weekend use levels, where resources can recover from the pressure of short-term use increases in use. Dispersed recreation enhances the quality of life for residents and provides tourist destinations, which contribute to local economies. Forest Service communication and interpretive messages show respect for the diverse backgrounds and needs of visitors.

The Forest Service communicates accurately and honestly and conveys a land ethic to visitors. Visitors not only understand how to reduce their impacts on the natural and cultural environment, but actively protect natural and cultural resources and wilderness values. Low-impact recreation principles and activities are promoted and widely practiced by the visiting public.

As a result of public stewardship and education, effective enforcement, patrols and use of refuse and recycling facilities, recreation impacts are minimized.

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Dispersed recreation activities are diverse and include scenic driving, hiking, bird watching, hunting, fishing, boating, water-play, mountain-biking, horseback riding, and camping. Activities do not detract from the natural character of the forest, resources, such as aesthetics, soils, vegetation, and wildlife, or user conflicts.

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Non-recreation activities that take place on the Coconino NF have minimal effect on recreation activities. For example, thinning projects do not result in slash piles that block trails, and projects that temporarily impact trails require a planning component to require restoration of the trails.

Forest-wide dispersed recreation sites are small, evidence of human waste and litter is minimal, and resource damage is minimal. Where resource damage has occurred, especially in high traffic locations, sites are rehabilitated to reduce impacts and discourage expansion of damages.

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Designated motorized camping corridors provide opportunities for dispersed camping with recreational vehicles and car camping. These corridors provide opportunities for camping in groups or individually in a natural setting with adequate space to allow for some privacy. There is a range of choices available for dispersed camping in terms of natural setting and location of the Forest. Most corridors are not overcrowded and the naturalness of the corridor is maintained. In camping corridors trees are healthy and intact and soil erosion is minimal.

A system of well-marked and well-maintained trails provides opportunities for visitors to explore the Forest. Construction and design of trails promotes sustainability of recreation opportunities. Access roads to trailheads are open and maintained, and trailheads provide adequate parking and vehicle turnaround space. Trails provide access to scenery and wildlife viewing opportunities with varying levels of physical challenge and experiences for different user groups. Damage to resources from trailheads and trails is minimal and within the ability of the forest to rehabilitate and prevent further damage.

Meadows and riparian areas are visually attractive and free from evidence of physical, mechanical, or vegetative damage due to recreation activities. Physical impacts to meadows and riparian areas are confined to engineered road crossings, trail crossings and access points. These structures minimize damage to meadows and riparian area.

Historic trails and routes are preserved and adapted for contemporary use, where appropriate and feasible. Unplanned social trails are rare and off-trail use is discouraged in ecologically-sensitive or high traffic areas. National Forest trails adjacent to urban areas connect to municipal and county trail systems, such as the Flagstaff Loop Trail and the Flagstaff Urban Trail System, to allow continuity in recreation experience. Trails in areas with resource concerns, where high user conflicts may occur, or in conjunction with other resource management activities, are rehabilitated or mitigated. Markers on winter sport trails are visible in winter. Mountain biking occurs on safe, multi-use trails that provide adequate opportunities for multi-ability challenges and scenic recreation experience. Consider single use trails to accommodate varying trail user experiences, including downhill and free-ride mountain bike and equestrian only, where appropriate. Trails are built, rerouted, or maintained utilizing current best practices as outlined in the Forest Service Handbook to promote tread sustainability and desired user experience. Techniques such as “designed” and “managed” use protocols, and strategies such as “stacked loops”, are employed to build a desirable, multiple-use trail system that addresses various users’ needs.

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Trailheads are easily accessible and do not interrupt the traffic flow of access roads. Infrastructure at trailheads is made of durable material and harmonizes with the landscape. The boundaries of trailhead parking areas are clearly defined to discourage parking outside of the trailhead. Interpretive information provided at the trailhead is appropriate for the uses of the trail and provides information on low impact trail use. Trailhead signing, brochures, and directional signing are visible and allow for easy navigation of the area, especially at trailheads near private land and communities. The level of development at trailheads is consistent with the development character of the surrounding area (Recreation Opportunity Spectrum setting), except where higher use require a higher level of development. Trailheads that are critical for multi-season recreation access accommodate snow removal and storage as well as safe for dispersed winter sport activities. Ample access to snowplay staging areas is available. Trailheads intended to accommodate horse trailers or motorized recreation are wide enough for vehicles with trailers to turn around and have a firm, stable surface to prevent resource damage in wet conditions.

Recreation opportunities at rivers and lakes emphasize day-use, nature-based activities, such as hiking, picnicking, bird watching, photography, boating, swimming, fishing, and interpretation. These activities in and near riparian areas and water do not contribute to bank erosion, vegetation or soil compaction, trash or sanitation issues, or the transport or establishment of invasive non-native species. Camping only occurs on hardened or developed sites, where recreation activities have damaged riparian, shoreline or aquatic resources. Angling opportunities are provided at remote sites and in a natural landscape.

Snowplay activities occur in a safe environment where conflict between motorized and non-motorized activities is mitigated through signing and design considerations. Downhill snowplay activities, such as sledding, do not occur where there is a potential conflict between the activity and traffic on paved roads, especially along the I-17 corridor. Snowplay activities are strategically located to disperse use, reduce congestion on major highways, and to provide a spectrum of snowplay opportunities from semi-primitive to developed settings.

A diverse range of hunting opportunities are available. Blinds, stands, cameras and other structures are temporary and portable and do not have long term effects on vegetation and wildlife. Quiet areas provide opportunities for non-motorized hunting experiences with minimal disturbance of wildlife.

Objectives

Connection of system trails to Flagstaff Urban Trails System, Flagstaff Loop Trail, and Coconino county trails.
Completion of the Flagstaff Loop Trail.

Guidelines

Designated motorized dispersed camping access routes should be located away from floodplains and environmentally and culturally sensitive areas.

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Adverse recreation impacts should be minimized or removed from occupied, suitable or potential Southwestern willow flycatcher or Mexican spotted owl habitat, as well as other listed and sensitive species. Methods may include area closures (seasonal, year-long, or permanent), limits on group-use size, road closures, [trail or road realignment](#), interpretation and education, fencing, special use permit requirements, and trash management.

Interpretation should follow the themes established in a District Interpretive Strategy.

Where necessary, National Forest visitor activities should be restricted from restoration sites, which may include soil, plant, watershed, and fire-related sites.

Trailhead locations should [minimize private land conflicts and avoid impacts on archaeological sites](#).

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Management Approach

Provide leadership to coordinate recreation and visitor information planning among major recreation providers, such as National Parks and monuments, State Parks, concessionaires, the Chamber of Commerce, and city and county governments.

[Will update the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the National Park Service and the Coconino National Forest. The MOU sets up 1) how the agencies communicate when situations arise, and 2) what criteria will be used to make decisions together. For the Flagstaff Area National Monuments some considerations should be included for: Native American access for traditional uses, law enforcement cooperation, personal use plant gathering, outfitter/guide parameters, commercial filming parameters, boundary management, fire management, location and management of NPS facilities on Coconino NF lands, National Historic Preservations Act (Section 106), National Environmental Policy Act and Endangered Species Act compliance coordination, shared services for monitoring, and cooperative efforts in managing interpretation and visitor services.]

Provide input to the design review of new developments (especially when they are adjacent to National Forest System lands), share public outreach and education tools, and share information about future plans in order to encourage uses on adjacent lands that are [compatible with the Forest Plan](#).

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When conducting trail planning include discussions and input from other land management agencies, non-profit organizations, special use permit holders, and local government trails coordinators, as well as other interested members of the public. Balance demands for non-motorized and motorized trails and provide opportunities for both.

Coordinate trailhead parking with future development on adjacent private lands, in order to take advantage of the opportunity to be proactive in designing trails and trailheads to maintain access to public lands. Cooperate with local governments to provide for snow removal, sanitation facilities, trash disposal and safe conditions for travel to and from winter outdoor activities.

Collaborate with State Parks to better meet visitor needs and protect resources in the vicinity of Slide Rock State Park and Red Rock State Park.

Future recreational trends and technology are evaluated for their effects to natural resources. Management Strategies are adapted and implemented as appropriate to prevent new recreation activities from having widespread and unmanaged impacts.

The Forest Service coordinates with other agencies, non-profit-organizations and concessionaires to provide free-riding and downhill mountain biking experiences, while being sensitive to resource concerns and issues. Snowplay opportunities use a similar strategy to disperse use and reduce congestion on major highways and to provide a spectrum of visitor experiences.

Management Area - Specific Direction

Urban-Rural Influence (Flagstaff Neighborhoods)

Desired Conditions

Along Woody Ridge, there are large tracts of unfragmented habitat and remote recreation opportunities. Remote characteristics are maintained as new residential development occurs. Woody Ridge has semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunities that are compatible with walk-in hunting.

Recreation opportunities near Flagstaff emphasize day and overnight-dispersed recreation opportunities with few developed facilities, except in established developed campgrounds. Trails are accessed through strategic located access points with an interconnected trail system. The NFS trail system connects to the Flagstaff Urban Trail and Coconino County trails system [and integrates with the Flagstaff Loop Trail](#) to provide continuous access to a wide range recreation opportunities throughout the urban area.

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Lake Mary

Desired Conditions

The primary focus of this area is water based recreation management. Camping occurs in designated dispersed camping sites and developed recreation facilities in the Lake Mary and Marshall Lake areas. Adoption of user-created trails is unlikely in this area. Dispersed recreation activities in this area include picnicking, cycling, fishing, wildlife and scenery viewing and other day-use activities.

Roads, trails, camping, and grazing are managed primarily to improve watershed condition particularly within grasslands, springs, and drainages. Protecting water quality in Upper and Lower Lake Mary is a priority to protect local drinking water. Proper waste disposal within this area is emphasized in management and interpretive signs and material.

Schultz Management Area

Desired Condition

The varied topography of Mt. Elden and Dry Lake Hills offers a variety of trail experiences for hikers, mountain bikers, climbers and equestrians.

The Dry Lake Hills Trail system provides non-motorized recreation trail opportunities. The trail system is stable and does not increase significant in mileage over time.

The base of Mt. Elden is primarily used for non-motorized recreation in order to protect deer winter habitat and cultural sites and to provide for high levels of non-motorized recreation. Extensive

signing, brochures, and patrols allows visitors to easily find trails and facilities. This area receives a great deal of day-use recreation, primarily due to the close proximity to Flagstaff.

There are opportunities for climbing on the west side of Mt. Elden, including outfitter-guide led activities. Existing trails are aligned to increase their sustainability and new trails are developed to disperse users and increase safety and sustainability. Trailheads provide access to a wide variety of trails for different types of recreation visitors.

Guideline

Maintain the Waterline Road as a high traffic non-motorized recreation corridor.

Management Approach

Partner with the City of Flagstaff [and recreation groups](#) to relocate the Schultz trailhead. [Consider building this new location into a mountain bike oriented recreation hub facility.](#) Create new trailheads as necessary.

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Walnut Canyon

Desired Condition

High-quality daytime recreation activities are available with few developed recreation facilities. Recreation use is concentrated along main corridors with few roads, trails, and people away from main corridors.

Demands for non-motorized and motorized trails are balanced and opportunities for both are provided. North and west of Walnut Canyon NM emphasize daytime recreation activities, primarily non-motorized. Remote dispersed recreation is the dominant type of recreation south and east of Walnut Canyon NM with day and overnight opportunities for motorized and non-motorized users. Balance recreation use and demand with protection of the soils, water, vegetation, and sensitive species.

Unneeded trails and off-trail use is minimal. The area has a primary trail system that serves as a collector for trails that originate in neighborhoods. Areas near to residential private lands may have large numbers of people on some occasions. Daytime activities are emphasized with some designated overnight camping opportunities.

Management Approach

In and around the steepest portions of Walnut Canyon, primitive non-motorized recreation opportunities are emphasized.

The values of Walnut Canyon National Monument are maintained and adjacent land uses complement National Park Service goals for the Monument as described in the National Park Service's General Management Plan.

Sedona/Oak Creek

Desired Condition

A variety of self-directed, day-use activities emphasizing hiking, scenic viewing and learning about the natural and cultural history of the Sedona/Oak Creek Ecosystem are encouraged. National Forest camping continues to be an important recreation experience. There is a range of nature-based

recreation opportunities that provide a wide array of benefits by meeting people's needs and preferences while sustaining the Sedona/Oak Creek Ecosystem.

A high-quality visitor experience is provided, enhanced by unaltered vistas of the redrock cliffs. Recreation opportunities are primarily nature based. Opportunities exist for individuals, families or small groups and opportunities for experiencing solitude, scenic beauty and natural quiet. Both short and long visits are supported by recreation opportunities on the Forest. Appropriate degrees of natural quiet are restored and maintained.

Visitors have access to high-quality trail experiences. The strong demand for inspirational and contemplative benefits in the natural landscape and settings that contribute to these benefits is recognized. Some recreation sites receive high levels of visitation and meet the demands of day-use activities, emphasizing scenic viewing, hiking, experiencing, and learning about the natural environment and cultural resources. Most places provide an un-crowded setting.

Most National Forest visitor activities occur at developed sites and on trails designed for high levels of use. Recreation site fees are maintained at an affordable level for families to access recreation opportunities in the Sedona and Oak Creek Canyon areas. Non-necessary non-system trails are discouraged. Trails that duplicate system trails or cause damage, such as erosion or plant loss, are rehabilitated.

A network of primarily non-motorized trails provides diverse opportunities for hikers, Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreationists, mountain bikers and equestrians while helping protect fragile natural resources and community relationships. Non-motorized trails provide access to enjoy the red rock landscape for the community, including people with disabilities.

Outstanding interpretive opportunities increase understanding of and appreciation for the area with emphasis on geology and natural history. Opportunities for wildlife viewing are available. Opportunities are provided for contemplative reflection and scenic vistas, and are accessible to older people and people with disabilities seeking opportunities for regenerative reflection.

Dispersed camping is limited to locations that protect resources, provide neighborhood security and protect the National Forest visitor's quality of experience.

Although the ROS objectives at Palatki and Honanki are the same as those of the surrounding Management Area (MA), the maximum desired number of social encounters is 3 to 4 groups per hour because of the lower capacity of these sites to handle visitation without damage to cultural values.

A high level of interpretation and personal contact is provided at cultural interpretive sites. On-site personnel and interpretation provide opportunities for interactive learning through: protection, documentation, and restoration projects at archaeological sites; appropriate access to site etiquette information; appreciation of archaeological conservation, native cultures and history; and visitor education about archaeology and historic resources that are fully protected. Full-time hosts are located at significant cultural interpretive sites. Information directs visitors to places that can sustain visitor use.

Objectives

Develop Schnebly Hill Vista as a viewpoint, interpretive site and possibly a trailhead within 10 years of plan approval.

Guideline

Sensitive plant populations should be protected by placing trails and trailheads out of sight of sensitive plants, such as Verde Valley sage and Delmaters agave.

Management Approach

Methods of creating and maintaining user friendly trails include: providing well-defined trails that encourage people to stay on designated routes; designing trails that provide a reasonable degree of access; [designing trails that meet user experience needs](#); installing trail markers and defining trail edges; and providing orientation maps.

Sedona Neighborhoods

Desired Condition

Relatively quiet, easily-accessed NF supports wildlife, scenic viewing, and experiencing nature. A system of trails and pathways surrounds the City of Sedona and the Village of Oak Creek and provides trail recreation opportunities and a means of non-motorized travel off busy streets.

Damaged recreation sites are restored, with priority given to sites adjacent to Sedona and the Village of Oak Creek. Local neighborhood concerns about the impacts of visitor use on residential quality of life are addressed by a variety of methods, including night-time closures, improving signs, and limiting motorized access and the number of visitors.

Volunteer partnerships have high resident participation and provide opportunities for [promoting?](#) stewardship with a strong learning component.

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Guideline

Access at neighborhood NF trailheads should be managed to discourage visitor parking along residential streets and to encourage alternative forms of transportation.

Management Approach

Collaborate with the Arizona Game & Fish Department (AG&FD) to educate residents about urban wildlife, such as deer, snakes, raccoon, skunk, and coyotes.

Special hunting and shooting regulations should be developed collaboratively with the AG&FD, the Yavapai and Coconino County Sheriff offices, and City of Sedona Police Department.

Use the Redrock Trails and the Sedona Urban Trails and Pathways Plans as guides for future trail planning efforts. (Refer to Map 6 - Redrock Trails Plan)

Partnerships should be expanded with neighborhoods to promote trail and resource stewardship and to obtain assistance in trail maintenance and planned trail construction.

Attachment 2

Coconino National Forest Plan Revision

Recreation Special Uses

Forest-wide Direction

Background and Description

Special use permits authorize services that support the Forest Service mission and meet the needs of the public. These permits are a partnership between the Forest Service and private businesses and individuals to provide services and facilities, such as outfitter-guide services, [skiing, and events such as mountain bike, trail running, and dogsled races.](#)

Desired Conditions

Special use activities blend into the landscape and do not draw attention to the activity or equipment. Commercial tours are focused on main roadways and vistas as well as selected recreation locations. They support the Forest Service mission by providing high-quality outdoor recreational, educational and interpretive opportunities. If the need can be demonstrated, commercial tours are allowed to provide opportunities for scenic viewing, natural history education, wildlife viewing and other activities that are compatible with resource protection and Forest direction.

Commercial and recreational activities occur during times and in locations that are consistent with the needs of National Forest users and area residents. These activities are consistent with other direction for the location including Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) objectives, resource protection and community goals. Commercial use travel is limited to roads and trails on the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MUVUM), or to sites designated in an operating plan for such use. Exceptions include activities that require very limited access over a short period of time, such as hot air balloon retrieval and similar activities, where this access is specified in the permit. Livestock used in special use activities are not allowed to access areas of unsuitable range conditions.

Outfitter/guide permits or permit use does not cause a significant change for the ROS social or managerial setting, such as allowing airboats or seaplanes on the lakes that are at a less-developed ROS setting. Generally, motor vehicle use for outfitter-guide activities occurs on roads and trails displayed on the MVUM. Commercial uses are encouraged to use private land for their activities when their proposed use is not consistent with National Forest goals and can be accommodated on private land.

Large group gatherings and recreation events are discouraged outside of suitably developed sites or areas that have already been analyzed for resource issues. Applicants are encouraged to use private land for staging when possible. Pre-approved sites are generally areas that are compatible with use by the general public and are identified based on their ability to support large group activities with minimal resource impacts. They do not have long-term evidence of erosion or invasive species as a result of special use activities. Events occur infrequently in areas where they will interfere with the general public's use of the land.

Recreation residences and commercial facilities on the Forest meet State and county health and safety standards. Their footprints are stable, with some exceptions to accommodate improvements that address health, safety, and environmental issues. Organization camps managed under special use

permits are focused on natural resource values, conservation education and emphasize non-motorized recreation opportunities.

Where feasible, Special Use Permittees are enlisted to focus appropriate recreation, such as lift-served mountain biking, competitive events, and other non-winter, forest dependent uses to permittees' permit areas.

Objectives

Replace outhouses (outbuildings with one or more seats and a pit serving as a toilet) at recreation residences within 5 years of plan approval.

Guidelines

Outfitter-guide motor vehicle use and camping activities should be excluded from areas adjacent to urban areas or areas with a high density of archeological sites.

Special use permits should not be given for activities proposed to occur within 200 feet of perennial streams, springs or sensitive waters. Exceptions will be made for hardened or slickrock sites, for activities in support of approved research, to improve safety, or to provide for site rehabilitation.

Commercial tours at high interest archeology sites such as Honanki, should be consistent with site protection and visitor experience objectives.

Standards

Prohibit motorized aircraft landings and takeoffs on National Forest System lands and waters, except for emergencies and rare administrative support activities.

Require rehabilitation of non-NFS trails and other sites created by activities authorized under special use permits.

Management Approach

Priority is given to permit applications received in response to a prospectus issues by the Forest Service. Unsolicited proposals will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as workload allows.

Management Area-Specific Direction

Lake Mary, Walnut Canyon, Shultz and Urban-Rural Influence Management Areas

Desired Condition

Generally, outfitter/guide activities or group activities do not occur in Deadman Wash, t Walnut Canyon from Fisher Point east, or Pumphouse Wash. Special use events occur on the Snowbowl Road infrequently and do not interfere with use of the area by the general public.

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Management Approach

Before permitting outfitter/guides adjacent to National Monuments, coordinate with the National Park Service. Outfitter guiding might also help meet the mission of the National Park Service in the National Monuments or on adjacent National Forest lands. Work cooperatively with NPS for special uses requests that occur on both Forest Service and NPS lands.

Sedona/Oak Creek Area

Desired Conditions

New outfitter-guide permits are issued for activities that have demonstrated public need, promote transportation services or public safety, or substantially increase protection of cultural or natural resources.

Commercial tours emphasize opportunities to experience scenic beauty, natural quiet, and contemplative reflection. Activities that vary from this condition, such as motorized tours, do not impact the ability of other forest users to have these experiences.

Recreation events emphasize nature-based activities and education.
Commercial filming using aircraft is limited in all management areas except the Savannah Management Area (MA) and limited places in the Gateway MA.

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Guideline

Statewide special use permits for the Sedona/Oak Creek Area should be issued by the Red Rock Ranger District. This will ensure compatibility with Forest Plan direction and appropriateness of the activity for the sensitive Sedona/Oak Creek Area.

Working Draft – text under development, subject to change Public input is welcome and would be most useful if received

Standard

Do not permit commercial tours on the Casner Powerline Road.

Do not permit new outfitter/guide permits in areas that are at, or approaching, capacity.

Management Approach

Develop partnerships with outfitter-guides for Schnebly Hill Road and other roads and facilities that receive high use by commercial tour activities for the purpose of maintaining and protecting resources in these areas.

The district will provide a commercial guide training program. Such training should focus on National Forest goals and regulations, Leave-No-Trace etiquette, and natural and cultural history. Training should occur annually or when new guides are hired. Collaborate with guides, where possible, to develop and implement the training program.

Work with local and regional governments and road agencies to develop transportation solutions that reduce traffic and vehicle impacts at high impact recreation areas on the Forest.

Collaborate with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Sedona Airport Administration and air tour operators to minimize aircraft effects on threatened, endangered or sensitive animal species. Special flight rules should be in place, particularly over suitable peregrine falcon nesting habitat and big game winter.

Sedona Neighborwoods

Desired Conditions

Special use activities that access National Forest Service land through neighborhoods address resident concerns for safety and minimize disturbance. Mitigations are identified in the authorized operating plans.

Management Approach

Commercial operators, filming groups, and homeowners work together with the Forest Service to resolve safety and quality of life conflicts, such as concerns about noise, safety, and facilities maintenance needs.

Attachment 3

Coconino National Forest Plan Revision

Motorized Recreation

Forest-wide Direction

Desired Conditions

Motorized vehicle use occurs on system roads, trails and areas, except as authorized by permit or for administrative uses. Opportunities exist in appropriate places for responsible motorized recreation with varying experiences for a variety of vehicle classes. Forest visitors enjoy semi-primitive motorized recreation and explore the backcountry in OHVs along designated routes. Noise from motorized vehicles is infrequent, away from areas of higher road and motorized trail density.

A motorized trail system provides: a variety of trail widths and levels of challenge for a diversity of users, scenery and wildlife viewing, a variety of terrain and conditions, and dispersed camping. Multi-use trails are more common than those available for only one class of vehicle and may interconnect with roads to make loops. Motorized routes are easily identified on the ground and the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). Single-track trails emphasize solitude from other types of motorized vehicles, to the extent practical, and challenge.

The boundaries of the Cinder Hills Off-Highway Vehicle Area are clearly delineated and prevent driving off-road, or outside of the designated area. Intrusion on the Sunset Crater National Monument is eliminated. Clear signing and information are provided to off-highway vehicle (OHV) drivers to make clear distinction between driving rules in the Cinder Hills OHV Area and rules that apply to the cinder cones outside of the OHV Area. Connectors provide access to the motorized trails within this area from a number of nearby access points and adjacent motorized trails.

Adequate signing is provided to advise publics of motorized restrictions. Information kiosks are located at main entryways onto the Forest with pertinent OHV recreation information. Information is provided for OHV recreationists and trail users, including maps and signs that provide road and trail information and explain national forest regulation for such activities as OHV travel, camping, and trail opportunities. Orientation information and interpretation is provided at sites that receive high levels of visitation.

Resource damage from unauthorized motorized trails is minimal and existing user-created roads and trails are rehabilitated to prevent future access by the public and to mitigate long-term soil and water impacts. Roads and trails are located with minimal impact to cultural sites, soil, water, and wildlife resources. Poorly located roads and trails are redesigned or relocated.

When developing motorized trails, consider their suitability as multiple-use trails for non-motorized recreation. If planned accordingly, motorized routes can be utilized by non-motorized users with other non-motorized trails to create long distance loop opportunities. Attention to sustainable trail building practices and tread type when building motorized trails can increase their appeal to a broader range of users, thereby amplifying the value of resources spent on recreational trails

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Objectives

Rehabilitate 20 to 50 miles of user-created routes per year until evidence of non-system trails is minimized Forest-wide.

Convert to motorized trails 20 miles of roads that are not needed for the road system south and east of Walnut Canyon where the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) setting is suitable for motorized recreation within 10 years of plan approval.

Guidelines

Off-trail/road use of any kind should be limited on large cinder cones outside of the Cinder Hills OHV Area to prevent loss of vegetative cover and soil erosion.

Seasonal motorized restrictions should be used to create and maintain quiet areas in cooperation with Arizona Game and Fish Department to preserve primitive hunting experiences.

Standards

Prohibit motor vehicle use beyond the designated system of roads, trails, and areas, as defined on MVUMs, except for those uses authorized by law, permits, and orders in connection with resource management and public safety.

Management Approach

Establish long-term partnerships with motorized recreation organizations to help the Forest motorized trails and foster a low-impact conservation ethic.

Recognize that motorized trails have the capacity to serve the most varied number of users when properly constructed to do so. Appropriately built motorized single track trail can serve as adventure long distance routes for bicycles, hikers, and equestrians. When used in conjunction with non-motorized routes, these trails can provide options for loops for non-motorized users.

Establish interpretive messages and programs with the National Park Service and volunteers from OHV users, including improved signing, information kiosks, and interpretive messaging. Provide signing and information aimed at the following objectives: to prevent riders from becoming lost; to show OHV riding locations; and to identify dangerous and/or closed areas.

Management Area-Specific Direction

Craters

Guidelines

Continue motorized travel restrictions similar to the current Forest orders where motorized use occurs on designated open roads and trails only.

Lake Mary Road

Guidelines

Consider motorized trail corridors in this Management Area (MA). The secondary road system should provide for multiple-use opportunities.

Sedona Oak Creek Ecosystem Area

Desired Conditions

Most motorized recreation opportunities are within the Savannah and the Schnebly Rim MAs, although opportunities may be available in other management areas.

Recreation in Neighborwoods, Oak Creek Canyon, Transition and Red Rock is largely non-motorized, except for Casner Powerline Access Road, Broken Arrow, and Soldier Pass.

Allow four-wheel-drive use along the Casner Powerline Access Road through a special use permit system consistent with: ROS goals for the Transition MA and adjacent Wilderness MA; wildlife objectives; soil protection; and where such use does not interfere with Arizona Public Service (APS) powerline access needs.

Road maintenance and road improvement activities are limited in order to conserve Semi-primitive Motorized ROS characteristics. Road maintenance is consistent with Management Area direction/ROS objectives.

Guidelines

A consistent design style should be used for interpretive and information signs and kiosks, but also allow for individual site distinctiveness.

Vehicle crossings of Dry Creek should be prohibited unless appropriate water quality protection measures can be implemented.

Vehicular access to Oak Creek should be restricted by measures such as vehicle barriers.

Roads should be maintained at the lowest standard possible consistent with safety and the desired primitive recreation experience in the Red Cliff MA.