



U.S. Forest Service
Coconino National Forest
1824 S. Thompson Street
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

News Release



Public Information: (928) 527-3600
www.CoconinoNationalForest.us

MEDIA CONTACTS
Brady Smith – Public Affairs Officer
George Jozens – Dep. Public Affairs Officer
Media Only: (928) 224-8306

Coconino NF releases revised Forest Plan

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz., May 25, 2018, For Immediate Release – After many years of public input, as well as collaboration with partner agencies and surrounding communities, the Coconino National Forest released its revised Forest Plan that will provide management guidance for its nearly two million acres for the next 10 to 15 years.

The revised Forest Plan focuses on active management that improves the resilience of the forest and reduce its susceptibility to uncharacteristic levels of disturbance from fire, drought, flooding, insects, and disease. The Plan also addresses improving forest access as well as supporting jobs and rural economies in northern Arizona. The overall goal is on manage ecosystems to benefit people and communities, and to foster sustainable, productive use of the Coconino National Forest—aligning with USDA Strategic Goals.

“Revising a Forest Plan is a lengthy and deliberative process,” said Laura Jo West, Coconino National Forest Supervisor, “but it is important that we took our time so that we were transparent and inclusive, allowing ample opportunity for public involvement as we designed a plan to steward these precious landscapes into the future.”

The Coconino National Forest supports roughly 5,500 jobs in recreation, forest products, and livestock grazing industries. These jobs contribute \$212 million in labor income annually. The revised Forest Plan includes direction for balancing primitive/dispersed recreation with both motorized and non-motorized access. It provides greater flexibility to actively manage forest ecosystems through commercial timber harvest, biomass removal and other forest products. The plan also recognizes the important role that naturally-ignited wildfires play on the landscape while providing guidance on reducing the risk of future, uncharacteristic wildfires.

There are recommendations and proposals in the revised Forest Plan for three Research Natural Areas, a combined Botanical and Geological Area and additions to three existing Wilderness Areas. Overall, there is a greater focus on improving conditions on the ground for healthy landscapes restoring sustainable ecosystems.

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While carrying forward some of the original 1987 Forest Plan, the revised plan is less prescriptive and eliminates areas of redundant law, regulation and policy.

Every national forest is required by federal law to operate under a Forest Plan and to periodically revise that plan with public involvement. More about the plan and associated documents can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/2lpUkyf>.

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Flagstaff Ranger Station: (928) 526-0866
Mogollon Rim Ranger Station: (928) 477-2255
Red Rock Ranger Station: (928) 282-4119



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