



# News from the Forest Service

Edited on: February 22, 2008



## *Coconino National Forest!*

Did you know that 2008 marks the centennial of the Coconino National Forest? President Theodore Roosevelt signed a proclamation on January 13, 1908 formally creating the Coconino National Forest from the San Francisco Mountains Forest Reserve. An Additional proclamation signed by Roosevelt on July 2, 1908 consolidated portions of the Black Mesa, Tonto and Grand Canyon Forest Reserves into the Coconino National Forest. Happy Birthday to the Coconino National Forest!!!

## *Are you willing to work at Blue Ridge Ranger Station?*



If you are interested please take a moment to read this! During the spring and summer months some of our employees participate in large fire assignments, during this time the Mogollon Rim Ranger District is interested in recruiting volunteers to assist in answering the telephones and assisting the public with questions and directions. Due to the increase volume of visitors and calls, we could sure use some help! The position is a volunteer position but some pay is possible. If you are interested in helping us please contact June Hermann at 928-477-2255 as soon as possible, so that we may have these position's in place BEFORE fire season arrives. It can be a very busy time of year for the forest service and your interest in assisting us is greatly appreciated!

## *Firewood Season*



I have been hearing some conflicting information regarding this years upcoming firewood season. I want to make sure that everyone has accurate and timely information. Firewood season is scheduled to begin on Saturday, April 19th this year. However, due to all of the snow that we have received this year, forest road access may be a challenge! As the snow melts and the roads dry out we plan to open gates. This may take longer than normal and we will have to see just what "Mother Nature" sends our way. The rules, regulations and cost will remain relatively the same as they were last year and previous years. As a reminder: firewood permits will need to be purchased at the Blue Ridge R.S. this year, due to the closing of the Happy Jack Information Center. Any questions please feel free to call us at 928-477-2255.

## *Did you Know Litter Lasts this long?*

- Cigarette butts . . . . . 1-5 years
- Aluminum cans . . . . .80-100 years
- Plastic bags . . . . .10-20 years
- Orange & banana peels . . Up to 2 years
- Glass bottles . . . . .1,000,000 years
- Plastic 6 pack holders ..100 years
- Plastic bottles . . . . . Indefinitely
- Nylon Fabric . . . . . 30-40 years
- Wool socks . . . . . .1-5 years

These are some pretty amazing statistics! Please don't forget to pick up your trash. DON'T LITTER and RECYCLE when possible!





## *Improving Arizona's National Forests*



This is an article that was published in the Arizona Republic newspaper by Shaun McKinnon. As we continue our recreation facility planning efforts we want to make sure the local community of Happy Jack stays informed. This is an excellent article and please stay tuned for updated information in the coming months.

### ***“Officials want to improve Arizona’s national forests”***

*The Arizona Republic*

*Shaun McKinnon*

Arizona’s national forests lure millions of visitors each year with high-country solitude, cool temperatures and an array of lakes and streams.

Now, the forest managers want to figure out how to keep those visitors happy.

The U.S. Forest Service is taking an inventory of its recreational offerings nationwide, everything from trails to campsites to boat docks. The intent is to focus more clearly on what users of each forest want, and then create a plan to meet those needs.

“We’re working hard to ensure the special places people enjoy are well-maintained and to make sure our facilities are well-maintained,” said Dennis Garcia, a recreation specialist for the agency’s Southwest Region. “Our goal is to be more transparent in what we’re doing.”

Officials at Arizona’s six forests have reached various stages of the process. Some have completed the plan, while others are preparing to seek comment. A five-year blueprint will take effect in each forest sometime in 2008.

Garcia said the Forest Service wanted the work plans to originate at the local level because each forest covers different landscapes and attracts visitors for different reasons. The agency wanted to zero in on those differences and directed each forest to designate a theme or a niche for its recreation plan.

In Arizona, the niche statements have emerged as diverse as the forests, which cover more than 11 million acres from the low deserts to the alpine meadows. The Tonto, home to six reservoirs and several rivers and streams, is building its plan around water recreation. The Kaibab has studied the needs of visitors to the Grand Canyon, which nestles against the forest.

“We have the distinction of bordering the park on north and south sides,” said Jackie Denk a Kaibab public affairs specialist. “A lot of people who travel through the forest also include a visit to the park, so we started our niche statement with ‘Kaibab National Forest, taking you to the edge’”.

Some of the forests spent as much as a year preparing to write the work blueprint. Forest officials took inventory of the recreational amenities and their conditions. Some trails and campsites date back decades and needed money for repairs or delayed maintenance.

## *Improving National Forest's contd.*



In some cases, forest managers will close sites that need too much work or that don't attract enough users.



“There are areas where maybe we don't need facilities or where we could let them go more rustic,” Denk said. “A lot of the use at some of our campsites was from people who are backpacking into Grand Canyon National Park. They are already prepared for the backcountry experience and don't need developed campsites.”

Officials of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, which cover some of the state's higher elevations, have proposed improving or expanding campsites after hearing early public comments. The forests set as their niche the ability to provide and escape from the desert heat.

“Campgrounds are extremely important for us,” said Bob Taylor, a resources specialist for the two forests. “We get a tremendous amount of recreation and visitors who want to experience the cooler areas.”

The Apache-Sitgreaves' plan would replace amenities at 12 sites, expand five other sites, begin charging a fee at 18 sites and reduce the length of seasonal use at as many as 34 sites to allow resources to be shifted elsewhere.

In surveying the Tonto forest, officials found amenities already sharply focused on water-based recreation. The Tonto manages reservoirs such as Canyon Lake, Saguaro Lake, Bartlett Lake and Roosevelt Lake, all wildly popular among Valley residents.

What managers did find was a noticeable migration of visitors from the crowded Salt River corridor over the lower Verde River, which is less developed.

“It's an area just on the outskirts of Scottsdale and Rio Verde,” said Dave Killebrew, recreation manager for the Tonto. “We don't have much in the way of facilities to accommodate them, so our prime emphasis will be to upgrade facilities.”

Tonto officials also plan to emphasize collection of user fees, which supplement federal appropriations. Uncollected fees figured prominently in most of the surveys.

Early public comments also produced some ideas that might never have been on the Forest Service's radar. The Kaibab, for example, found a growing interest in bird watching around Jacob Lake near the Grand Canyon's North Rim. A number of people also asked the forest to consider the need to find spiritual solitude.

“That's a challenge,” said Charlotte Minor, a Kaibab landscape architect. “I'm not sure yet how we do that, but it's important that we include it.”

The work plans will cover five years, but officials say the blueprints will evolve as needs change. The agency will create new plans as work on these is completed.

*Until next month, Jean Gilbertson, Editor*



