

NATIONAL FOREST 2006

REPORT TO THE STAKEHOLDERS

Dear Coconino National Forest Friends, Visitors, and Neighbors:

While 2005 was filled with celebration of the Forest Service's rich history and many achievements during our agency's first one-hundred years of existence, 2006 has been a year of embracing the promise of the future. This year has included several innovative and exciting projects that have contributed significantly to the sustainable management of our diverse landscape.

Importantly, the forest has been operating under a forest-wide plan that was developed in the mid- 1980's and has not been comprehensively updated since. Our planning team has therefore been hard at work in designing and implementing a Forest Plan Revision process to develop a new plan that is more appropriate for current and projected social and ecological conditions. In addition, we have initiated our Travel Management Rule process in order to address current and future needs for a healthy forest and the rising popularity of motorized travel on public lands. Both projects include on-going opportunities for public involvement and I strongly encourage everyone to participate.

The year presented many challenges to the forest and to the communities. A demanding and threatening fire season, including a full-forest closure, tested the spirits of crews and residents alike. Everyone's cooperation and perseverance, however, strengthened bonds between us and the communities we serve. We are particularly proud that we were recently voted Best Public Agency of 2006 by Arizona Daily Sun readers.

In addition to the above topics, inside this report you will also find articles about the Discovery Channel Telescope, Elden Pueblo, forest achievements, and upcoming 2007 projects. I send this year's Report to the Stakeholders with gratitude to the forest employees and the community for everyone's hard work and support. As a new year unfolds, I urge you all to continue utilizing and respecting this precious land of ours. Here's to taking the Coconino National Forest into the next 100 years.



Nora Rasure

Nora Rasure
Forest Supervisor



FOREST PLAN REVISION

The Coconino National Forest encompasses 1.8 million acres of spectacularly diverse land in northern Arizona. Management of this land is guided by a forest plan that was developed in 1982. The National Forest Management Act passed by Congress requires that each national forest plan is periodically updated. While the Coconino National Forest Plan has been amended several times for specific projects or smaller parts of the forest, it is time to do a strategic revision of the plan.

During the fall of 2006, the Forest Plan Revision team worked collaboratively with the public to complete the initial stages of the revision process. Public meetings were held at several locations across northern Arizona. Public comments from meetings and other correspondence are posted on our website.

What's Next

Currently, the team is forming four focus groups, each concentrating on one of four topics: special areas, social economic issues, ecological sustainability, and species diversity. This coming year, the Forest Plan Revision team will define issues, develop alternatives, and determine effects in preparation for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We appreciate your involvement and look forward to hearing your comments as the revision process continues.

For more information on how you can get involved please visit our website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/plan-revision.shtml> or contact the Supervisor's Office, attn: Forest Plan Revision.


**VISIT
US
ONLINE!**

Find
information
on forest
projects,
recreation,
closures, and
restrictions
at
**WWW.
COCONINO
FOREST.US**



NEW RANGER STATIONS

The Coconino and Prescott National Forests launched a coordinated project to develop two new administrative sites in the Verde Valley and Sedona area. The existing administrative sites have been inadequate to meet growing management needs. After the Arizona National Forest Improvement Act passed in 2000, the Forest Service received legislative authority to sell the existing Sedona and Camp Verde administrative sites and use the proceeds to develop two new facilities.

The new Red Rock Ranger Station will be located one mile south of the Village of Oak Creek, and the Verde Valley Ranger Station will remain in the town of Camp Verde at either the existing site or a new site on Middle Verde Road, south of Interstate 17.

Groundbreaking for the new Red Rock Ranger Station was in September 2006 and the Red Rock staff expects to move into the facility by spring, 2008. Until then, the temporary Red Rock Ranger District can be found at the old Beaver Creek Ranger Station located at 7780 E. Beaver Creek Ranger Station Road, Rimrock. For more information on the Verde Valley Ranger Station, contact the Prescott National Forest.



Following the Brins Fire, we received over \$10,000 from individuals and groups of the community to support fire rehabilitation projects. The Red Rock Ranger District would like to thank the residents and businesses for their continued efforts and support as we maintain the extraordinary landscape of Sedona.

FACELIFT FOR KNOLL LAKE CAMPGROUND

This past year, the Mogollon Rim Ranger district began reconstructing Knoll Lake Campground. Each campsite was upgraded with new picnic tables, grills, campfire rings, and tent pads, as well as new gravel surfacing on all roads. Vault toilets were replaced throughout the facility with new accessible restrooms located at the boat ramp. The campground is expected to reopen summer 2007.

Other campgrounds forest-wide are scheduled to open around April. As camping season approaches, remember campfires should be cool to the touch before they're left unattended.

Contact your local ranger station for campground information, forest conditions, restrictions, and fire safety tips.

DISCOVERY CHANNEL TELESCOPE

Construction began on the new Discovery Channel Telescope located off Forest Highway 3 (Lake Mary Road), just north of Happy Jack. Dry wall, electrical, and extensive plumbing have been established within the facility. A temporary covering was installed atop the structure in December, however, a permanent dome will be built when the telescope is installed.

Currently, the mirror for the telescope resides at University of Arizona in Tucson where it will undergo a polishing process for 2 years.

The telescope is extremely sensitive to heat and light and as a result, it is critical for the facility to remain cool at all times. For this reason, copper



tubing has been installed in all of the walls and the building will be painted white.

Once operational in 2009, The Discovery Channel Telescope will expand opportunities for public outreach and education. Additionally, in a single exposure, it will enable astronomers to survey an area of sky approximately the size of 16 full moons – an area much larger than any existing telescope in its class.

TRAVEL MANAGEMET RULE

The number of off-highway vehicle (OHV) users in the United States has climbed from approximately 5 million in 1972 to 51 million in 2004. The Forest Service now manages more than 300,000 miles of road and 35,000 miles of trail for motor vehicle use nation-wide. Currently, cross-country motorized travel is permitted except in areas that are signed "closed" or are restricted to seasonal use. In order to comply with the nationally issued 2005 Travel Management Rule, the Coconino Forest will identify a system of roads, areas, and trails across the entire forest to remain open to motorized use. This system should be socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable over time. These decisions will be made locally with public input and in coordination with state, local, and tribal governments and will result in the publication of a Motor Vehicle Use Map by September 2009.

This past fall, the Coconino National Forest began working collaboratively with the public in the initial stages of travel management planning. Public meetings were held at various locations across Northern

Arizona to collect ideas about motorized travel management.

What's Next

The Coconino National Forest plans to publish a Proposed Action in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and Travel Management Rule by spring of 2007. Another round of public meetings will precede the release of the Proposed Action.

We have already received a great amount of participation and we're looking forward to more as the project continues. For additional information about the process and opportunities for public participation, see our

website (www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/tmr) or contact the Supervisor's Office, attn: Travel Management.



THE ELDEN PUEBLO PROJECT JOINS HANDS ON THE LAND



The Elden Pueblo Project, a prehistoric ruins and educational site on the Coconino National Forest, applied for and was accepted into the Hands on the Land field classroom network in July 2006. This is a national network consisting of five land management agencies, a foundation, schools, and private-sector partners designed to connect students, teachers, and parents to their public lands. There are 58 of these sites in the country and Elden

Pueblo is the first USDA Forest Service site in Arizona. From the Hands on the Land central website, information can be found for each archaeological site within the program.

The Elden Pueblo Project is an archaeology-based program, where volunteers work in cooperation with scientists and land managers to provide programs for the public. The funding received from this award will be used to develop the Elden Pueblo portion of the Hands on the Land website and to purchase supplies for

educational programs. The website will provide a site tour, program information, and lesson plans, as well as a space for student materials relating to stewardship efforts from other community partners such as NAU and the Youth Volunteer Corps. It is indeed an honor to have our Coconino National Forest heritage site a part of the Hands on the Land network. Contact the Peaks Ranger District or visit the Hands on the Land website (www.handsontheland.org) for more information.



How do fires get their names?

Fires are named by the first crew to respond. Generally, the name comes from a nearby geographic feature, but firefighters get to be creative too. A small fire on Thanksgiving Day was appropriately named the Turducken Fire for the increasingly popular Turkey/Duck/Chicken holiday dish.

FIRE SEASON 2006

The Coconino experienced an extremely dry year. Such conditions made the land surrounding our communities exceptionally vulnerable to large scale incidents. Three wildfires in particular threatened the safety of our homes and the beauty of our forest. The La Barranca, Woody, and Brins fires all inhibited summertime recreation, were very costly, and most importantly, warranted emergency evacuations. Still, no homes or businesses were lost and in the wake of all these fires, we can walk away with appreciation for the successes of the season.

The Coconino National Forest had over 400 fires this past year, yet only a handful of these reached the ears of the public. Most were found quickly and contained at under an acre.

Other Contributing Factors

- **Multi-Agency Teamwork** – Many wildfires require the cooperation from several different city, county, and state agencies.
- **Fuels Reduction** – The Coconino is dedicated to treating forest fuels – especially those adjacent to the communities – with prescribed burns and thinning. The less fuels, the smaller the threat.
- **Available Resources** – Expecting a

severe fire season, the Coconino and other agencies made necessary preparations, ensuring plenty of firefighting resources.

• **Public Involvement** – An wildfire cannot be managed without the support of the public. The effectiveness of restrictions and closures relies on public compliance and willingness to learn about fire and fire safety.

Of the hundreds of fires that we responded to this year, less than one hundred were human caused. This low number is part of a four-year long trend and is mainly because the respect of our land is spreading like, well, wildfire.

WHAT'S AHEAD IN 2007

The Forest Plan Revision process and Travel Management Rule project will continue in 2007.

See related articles inside.

Wet Weather Travel – The Coconino National Forest may implement a wet weather travel policy this winter, temporarily restricting travel to a reduced number of forest roads on the amount and distribution of precipitation received. The wet weather travel restrictions will temporarily close many roads and prohibit cross-country motor vehicle travel including All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs). A backbone system of roads may remain open to allow forest access. During times of heavy rain or snow, however, forest managers could choose to close all roads in affected areas to protect forest roads and resources and to provide for public safety. Roads that remain open are the most suitable for travel during wet conditions and will be strategically located to provide reasonable access to the forests.

Interagency Recreation Pass – A new interagency recreation pass that will benefit visitors to national public lands combines the benefits of existing recreation passes from five federal agencies into one comprehensive pass, the "America the Beautiful – National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass."

The new pass covers recreation opportunities on public lands managed by four Department of the Interior agencies – the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation – and by the Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service.

Access to most public lands remains free. The pass applies to those locations that currently have entrance or standard amenity fees. On the Coconino

National Forest this includes areas covered by the Red Rock Pass except those operated by private concessionaires.

The new program replaces the Golden Eagle, Golden Age, and the Golden Access Passports as well as the National Parks Pass. Existing Golden Passports will remain valid until expired.

Sales of the new pass will begin in January 2007 at your local ranger station.

Fire Use – Fire managers worked with forest planners to update the Coconino Fire Management plan to include wildland fire use. The plan will define specific conditions and areas where naturally-ignited fires can be managed to meet resource objectives such as recycling nutrients in the soil, enhancing habitat for wildlife, and reducing the risk of high-intensity wildland fires. Thus, the term "Wildland Fire Use" – fire used to benefit the ecosystem.

Later this coming year, in addition to suppression, Wildland Fire Use will be another option available for the management of wildland fires.

2006

ACCOMPLISHMENTS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This report to the stakeholders was prepared by
**Amber Ramirez and
Brienne Untalan**

FIRE MANAGEMENT

Initial-entry Broadcast Burn WUI* Accomplishments:

* Note: WUI Refers to the Wildland/Urban Interface

| Project | Target | Accomplishment |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| A-1 East | 600 acres | 630 acres |
| A-1 West | 450 acres | 450 acres |
| Bald Mesa Fuels Reduction | 2,500 acres | 3,500 acres |
| BRUI | 1,500 acres | 1,500 acres |
| Ft. Valley | 500 acres | 500 acres |
| Kachina | 540 acres | 540 acres |
| Lake Mary | 400 acres | 787 acres |
| Woody Ridge | 100 acres | 130 acres |
| Total: | 6,590 acres | 8,037 |

Slash-Pile burning WUI Accomplishments:

| Project | Target | Accomplishment |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Bear Park | 50 acres | 50 acres |
| Ft. Valley 1 | 350 acres | 350 acres |
| Kachina | 650 acres | 650 acres |
| Lake Mary | 300 acres | 300 acres |
| Oak Creek | 10 acres | 10 acres |
| Total: | 1,360 acres | 1,360 acres |

Thinning Treatments WUI and NON-WUI Accomplishments:

| Project | Target | Accomplishment |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Bald Mesa Fuels Reduction | 200 acres | 200 acres |
| Ft. Valley 1 | 1,005 acres | 1,005 acres |
| Kachina | 1,076 acres | 1,076 acres |
| Oak Creek | 70 acres | 70 acres |
| Victorine | 570 acres | 570 acres |
| Total: | 2,921 acres | 2,921 acres |

Non-WUI Initial-entry Broadcast Burn and Maintenance WUI and NON:

| Project | Target | Accomplishment |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Apache Maid | 500 acres | 500 acres |
| Good Enough/Tule | 850 acres | 850 acres |
| IMAX | 250 acres | 250 acres |
| Mint East | 1,200 acres | 1,200 acres |
| Pete | 1,150 acres | 1,150 acres |
| Pocket /Baker | 2,500 acres | 4,000 acres |
| Rocky | 1,200 acres | 1,200 acres |
| Spearmint | 350 acres | 350 acres |
| Valley | 2,400 acres | 2,787 acres |
| Total: | 10,400 acres | 12,287 acres |

FY 2007 WUI Planned Broadcast Burns, Hand Pile Burns and Thinning Projects:

| Project | Type | Target |
|------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| A1 | Broadcast Burn | 1,242 acres |
| Apache Maid | Broadcast Burn | 500 acres |
| Bald Mesa | Broadcast Burn | 500 acres |
| Blue Ridge Urban Inter | Broadcast Burn | 2,450 acres |
| Fort Valley | Broadcast Burn | 400 acres |
| Kachina Village | Broadcast Burn | 459 acres |
| Kachina Village | Thinning | 61 acres |
| Kachina Village | Pile Burn | 600 acres |
| Mormon Lake Basin | Thinning | 1597 acres |
| Oak Creek | Pile Burn | 10 acres |
| Oak Creek | Thinning | 70 acres |
| Peppermint (NON-WUI) | Pile Burn | 175 acres |
| Pipeline | Pile Burn | 95 acres |
| Pocket Baker | Broadcast Burn | 450 acres |
| Rocky | Broadcast Burn | 265 acres |
| Spearmint (NON-WUI) | Pile Burn | 600 acres |
| Victorine (NON_WUI) | Broadcast Burn | 4,600 acres |
| Woody Ridge | Broadcast Burn | 290 acres |
| Woody Ridge | Pile Burn | 1,636 acres |
| Total: | | 16,000 acres |

Wildfires

Number of Wildfires:

| Cause | Count |
|---------------|------------|
| Human Caused | 98 |
| Lightening | 317 |
| Total: | 415 |

Wildfire Acres Burned:

| Cause | Acres |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Human Caused | 5,895 acres |
| Lightening | 783 acres |
| Total: | 6,678 acres |

Recreation & Lands:

Number of Visitors to the Forest (Data Collected in 2000) **1.89 Million**

The National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey was conducted on the Coconino National Forest this year. The Coconino is the second most visited national forest in the southwestern region.

Number of Individual Campsites Maintained:

| | Total Number of Sites |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Peaks Ranger District | 78 |
| Mormon Lake Ranger District | 204 |
| Mogollon Rim Ranger District | 196 |
| Red Rock Ranger District | 197 |
| Total: | 675 |

Number of Group Campsites Maintained:

| | Total Number of Sites |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Peaks Ranger District | 3 |
| Mormon Lake Ranger District | 2 |
| Mogollon Rim Ranger District | 2 |
| Red Rock Ranger District | 4 |
| Total: | 11 |

Recreation Areas:

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Picnic Areas | 17 new total |
|---------------------|--------------|

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Rental Cabins | 3 |
|----------------------|---|

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Miles of Trail | 815 |
|-----------------------|-----|

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Number of Trailheads | 131 |
|-----------------------------|-----|

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Miles of Forest Road | 5,572 |
|-----------------------------|-------|

Volunteer Information

| District | Volunteers | Hours | Value |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| Red Rock Ranger District | 609 | 37,984 | \$515,823 |
| Mormon Lake/ Peaks Ranger Districts | 705 | 13,343.5 | \$142,179 |
| Mogollon Rim Ranger District | 747 | 13,292.5 | \$182,311 |
| Totals | 2,061 | 64,620 | \$840,313 |

Law Enforcement:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Incident Reports | 1,288 |
| Warnings Issued | 468 |
| Violations Issued | 605 |
| Arrests | 64 |
| Public and Other Assists | 182 |
| Public Contacts | 14,183 |
| Total Value of Violations Issued | \$ 120,580.00 |
| Total Value Of Fines Collected | \$78,572.00 |
| Cannabis Plots Eradicated | 0 |
| Damage to Government Property | 0 |

Stewardship:

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Acres of Invasive Weed Treatment | 2,327 acres |
| Acres of Soil and Water Improvement | 510 acres |
| Number of National Fire Plan Projects | 214 acres |
| Acres of Wildlife Habitat Restored or Enhanced | 4,825 acres |
| Miles of fence to protect seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands on Anderson Mesa | 7.75 miles of fence |
| Miles of Stream Habitat Restored | 8 miles |

CONTACT INFORMATION

Coconino National Forest
Supervisor's Office
1824 S. Thompson
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
(928) 527-3600

Peaks Ranger District
5075 N. Highway 89
Flagstaff, AZ 86004
(928) 526-0866

Mormon Lake Ranger District
4373 S. Lake Mary Rd.
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
(928) 774-1147

Red Rock Ranger District
PO Box 20429
Sedona, AZ 86341
(928) 282-4119

Mogollon Rim Ranger District
HC 31, Box 300
Happy Jack, AZ 86024
(928) 477-2255

