

NATIONAL FOREST

Coconino

2007 REPORT TO THE STAKEHOLDERS

Dear Coconino National Forest Friends, Visitors, and Neighbors:

As I reflect back on 2007, the highlights that come to mind are associated with the time I spent out of the office, on the Forest, seeing visitors at play; employees, volunteers, and cooperators at work; and partners joining us to manage the Coconino National Forest.

Last winter, as I walked thru the Wing Mountain Snowplay Area and saw the hundreds of people enjoying themselves sledding and playing in the snow, I appreciated why it is so important for safe and managed snowplay areas with facilities like bathrooms and parking for the many visitors. The Wing Mountain Snowplay Area came about through the efforts of the Northern Arizona Winter Recreation Task Force, a community-based group of individuals, organizations, and agencies including the Forest Service, which formed in 2005 to address winter recreational needs. During the 2006-2007 winter season over 13,000 people visited the Wing Mountain Snowplay Area. Collaborations between the Coconino and the community are vital to finding ways to provide safe and managed snowplay sites.

If it's not snowing on the Forest then it must be fire season. In 2007, we responded to 401 lightning and human-caused fires which occurred in every month except January. In July 2007, as I visited the 5,046 acre

Birdie fire, southwest of Mormon Lake Village, I wished the Mormon Lake Basin project – which was designed to reduce hazardous fuels and improve forest health on 2,269 acres near Mormon Lake Village – was already done, not months away from starting. In conjunction with the Greater Flagstaff Forest Partnership, contractors and other cooperators, we've made good progress treating hazardous fuels in the Flagstaff area on the Fort Valley, Woody, Mountaineer and Eastside projects. And planning for the last project around Flagstaff is underway. I believe our efforts at protecting communities through fuels reduction projects around Flagstaff will serve us well when a fire happens to start. In addition to these projects, the Coconino began utilizing and managing lightning caused fires during the 2007 fire season to treat fuels and restore fire adapted ecosystems across the forest.

Beside the need to restore fire to the ecosystem, the other significant issue facing the forest is the increasing impacts and needs associated with the recreational use of the forest.

One particular area that needs to be addressed is Fossil Creek. There have been significant resource accomplishments in Fossil Creek, including the restoration of the water flow and the reintroduction of

native fish. Unfortunately, the increasing recreational use of the area has resulted in increased user-created impacts such as littering, improper disposal of human waste, trampling of vegetation, and other resource damage. In response to these issues, the forest is working with Northern Arizona University and other stakeholders to find ways we can work together to better address these issues and needs.

I believe the most promising and lasting way to sustain the resources of the Coconino National Forest and to address users' needs continues to be through partnerships between the Forest Service and the communities – individuals and organizations that also care so much about this incredible place. I invite and encourage you to be part of this great outdoor adventure – managing the Coconino National Forest.

Nora B. Rasure

Nora Rasure
Forest Supervisor



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.

MORE KIDS IN THE COCONINO WOODS

The Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, Gail Kimbell, presented a challenge to all agency employees and partners, and anyone who cares about the future of forests or of children. The challenge: Take a child to visit the woods this year...share the wonder. On the Coconino National Forest, we partner with several programs that get kids outdoors in the woods.

Camp Colton, also known as Project LIFE (Life in the Flagstaff Environment) has been part of growing up in Flagstaff since 1971. Sixth grade classes visit Camp Colton, surrounded by Coconino National Forest on Hart Prairie, for a week of environmental and outdoor education. One afternoon each week, their "guest teacher"

from the Forest Service shares a lesson about fire education, wildlife research, Leave No Trace camping, or another facet of the forest environment. <http://www.friendsofcampcolton.org/>

Northern Arizona University School of Forestry's Junior Foresters Academy offers an opportunity each summer to grow the next crop of forest resource professionals. JFA offers a hands-on introduction to the world of forestry and environmental science, connecting youth to the outdoors as they learn and teach others about environmental stewardship, land ethics and forest health, while having fun. <http://www.for.nau.edu/CentennialForest/content/view/531/731/>

Phoenix families who want to discover the outdoors can sign up for one of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department's family camping weekend at Camp Colley, near the Mogollon Rim Ranger Station. The neighboring national forest provides hiking and biking trails, as well as projects to help protect the land. <http://phoenix.gov/PRL/campcolley.html>

Envirothon is a national high school academic challenge in environmental sciences. Coconino National Forest staff lends their professional expertise to local high school teams in preparation of the Arizona state competition each spring. In the summer of 2008,

the international Envirothon competition will be in Flagstaff, Arizona. <http://www.azenvirothon.org/>

Northern Arizona residents and visitors can discover the past at Elden Pueblo. This popular public archaeology site on the northern edge of Flagstaff offers several open house days each year. It's also an outdoor classroom and part of the Hands on the Land network of public land educational sites that can be visited in person or online.

http://www.handsontheland.org/profiles/profile___details.cfm?sitecode=elpu

VISIT US ONLINE!

Find information on forest projects, recreation, closures, and restrictions at WWW.COCONINOFOREST.US

FOSSIL CREEK MANAGEMENT

As we look at the management needs that exist within the Fossil Creek drainage it is helpful to understand current efforts underway. Since the re-establishment of full flows in Fossil Creek an increased number of visitors are drawn to the area for water-based recreation. The Coconino and Tonto National Forests, local partners, and volunteers are collaborating to help develop both short and long-term management strategies.

Northern Arizona University and the Coconino National Forest have organized a Fossil Creek Stakeholders group that is working to seek additional funding, prioritize work, organize volunteers, and help manage recreation within the Fossil Creek area. We believe a united front is advantageous in addressing current recreation issues and management needs.

Specific Fossil Creek area-concerns include an increasing number of resource impacts, sanitation and litter issues, and the need for improving public education. Implementing a "Leave No Trace" education program both within and outside the area is highly important. This is a very

isolated and heavily visited area; therefore additional facilities may be necessary. Maintaining restrooms and keeping new roads from increasing near the creek, however, requires a full time presence. In addition, access roads are periodically impassible and contracting commercial maintenance of these facilities is a concern.



Current management efforts include organized volunteer events, isolated road closures, weekly forest and volunteer clean-ups, increased signing and shared interagency patrol. Northern Arizona University researchers and ADEQ routinely assist the forests in water quality monitoring. Even with these

concerted efforts, recreation impacts continue to increase.

In the area of enforcement, both the Coconino and the Tonto National Forests are experiencing an upswing in visitation, taxing law enforcement efforts. Our law enforcement officers cover several million acres and serve millions of visitors each year. Fossil Creek continues to be a top priority. Additionally, we appreciate Arizona Game and Fish, U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Gila and Yavapai County law enforcement officers in their assistance. The responsibility to maintain this area, however, lies not only with the enforcement officers and the dedicated stakeholders, but with the visitors who recreate at Fossil Creek.

The current Forest Plan Revision planning process will consider the Fossil Creek area management needs. In addition, Fossil Creek is being proposed as a designated Wild and Scenic River. If approved by Congress, a river management plan will be required addressing specified river corridor management values.

We look forward to working with the Fossil Creek Stakeholders group in the months ahead and in developing both short and long term management strategies. For more information or to participate in this effort, please contact Connie Birkland at (928) 282-4119.

FOREST LAND, OR LAND FILL?

In just five years, visitation on the Coconino National Forest has increased 72% – from 1.8 million to approximately 3.3 million visitors per year. Unfortunately, the multitudes of trash left in the wake of these visitors have also increased. Hundreds of thousands of pounds of litter are removed from this forest each year.

And this trash was left behind by the entire spectrum of forest visitors. Trash collected was from campsites (including bags with human waste), group events, shooting areas, transient camps, snowplay litter, and illegal dumps from local residents (including appliances, furniture, and building materials). In addition, over 20 abandoned vehicles were collected this year.

But the number of Forest Service employees isn't growing to match the increase in forest use and the resulting impact problems. The Coconino does not hire employees solely to clean-up after neglectful forest users. There is no "trash crew" on the forest. The time spent on litter removal is time lost to other recreation and forest protection efforts such as restoring trails or creating new ones, and responding to forest violations – abandoned campfires, OHV violations, and other emergencies.

The Coconino has made several strides toward trash reduction. Recently, the forest acquired a Bobcat and a small dump truck to aid in the removal of heavy and large litter items – slabs of concrete, pieces of small buildings (yes, they do get dumped on the forest), and other construction debris. Coconino County and the City of Flagstaff each contribute funds to the Forest Service to help with the costs of trash removal; and volunteers – Scout groups, Church groups, fraternal organizations, local clubs and business, and individuals – have donated their time and efforts to clean-up projects on the forest. The forest also hosts several Public Clean-Up Days at popular sites across the forest.

Sadly, all this work only makes a small dent in the ever-accumulating trash. Access for heavy machinery is limited. Volunteers are few and far in between and on many occasions, less than five volunteers showed for a Public Clean-Up Day. The Coconino National Forest is here for everyone to enjoy, but keeping it healthy is also everyone's responsibility.

- Pack it in, Pack it out! Such an easy phrase to remember! Whatever you bring with you, pack it out – all the way out – when you leave.
- Report dump-sites and illegal dumping to your local Forest Service office.
- Get involved in volunteer opportunities – Check the website for Public Clean-Up Days and other volunteer programs, or call your local ranger district.
- Don't wait for Public Volunteer Days – Do your part every time you take a walk with the dogs; every time your family goes for a fishing trip; every time you take the OHV's out for a ride. Leave the forest cleaner than when you arrived.

“The Coconino does not hire employees solely to clean-up after neglectful forest users. There is no “trash crew” on the forest.”

In a single day, over two truckloads of trash we collected from the area around Humphrey's Trailhead Parking Lot



TRAVEL MANAGEMENT RULE

2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Completed Travel Analysis Process (TAP)
- Released Proposed Action
- Held four public meetings introducing the Proposed Action
- Analyzed and identified public comments in response to the Proposed Action
- Developing Alternatives to the Proposed Action

2008 TASKS:

- Conduct effects analysis for Proposed Action, No Action and alternatives
- Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
- Release DEIS summer/fall
- Collect and analyze public comments to the DEIS
- Continue development of the Motorized Visitor Use Map

FOREST PLAN REVISION

2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Held multiple meetings with each topic group: Ecological Sustainability, Species Diversity, Special Areas, and Socio-Economic groups
- Conducted Economic and Social Risk Assessment
- Conducted Vegetative and Species Risk Assessment
- Completed Economic and Social Sustainability Assessment
- Completed Ecological Sustainability Assessment
- Started Wilderness Suitability Study

2008 TASKS:

- Identify Need for Change in current Forest Plan
- Create Initial Rough Proposed Plan
- Conduct public meetings and build Forest Plan
- Release Proposed Plan
- Conduct public meetings to discuss Proposed Plan
- Conduct Wilderness Suitability Study: evaluate inventory and capability, availability and need, hold public meetings

DID YOU KNOW? Litter lasts this long...

Cigarette butts 1-5 years
Aluminum cans and tabs . .80-100 years
Plastic six-pac holders . . . 100 years
Orange and banana peels . .up to 2 years
Plastic bags10-20 years



Glass bottles1,000,000 years
Plastic bottle Indefinitely
Nylon fabric 30-40 years
Wool socks1-5 years

VOLUNTEER ON ANDERSON MESA!

Anderson Mesa Volunteer Events are among the many volunteer opportunities on the Coconino. At the 2008 events listed below, volunteers will participate in fence removal and modification.

- May 17-18 - Near Lower Lake Mary. Sponsored by the Arizona Antelope Foundation, Arizona Wildlife Federation, USFS & AZGFD.
- June 14 - Near Kinnikinick Lake Anderson Mesa. Sponsored by the Diablo Trust, USFS & AZGFD.
- July 19 - Near Ashurst Lake. Sponsored by Diablo Trust, USFS & AZGFD
- August 16 - Near Ashurst Lake. Sponsored by Diablo Trust, USFS & AZGFD

Projects begin at 7:30am. High clearance vehicles will be necessary for some locations. Contact Henry Provencio (928-526-0866, hprovencio@fs.fed.us) for more information or if you plan to attend.



WHAT'S AHEAD IN 2008?

The Red Rock District Office is moving! Construction on the new facility is expected to conclude in the Spring of 2008. Stay tuned for Open House and Grand Opening dates.

2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Recreation & Lands

Number of Visitors to the Forest (Data Collected in 2005) 3.25 Million

Number of Single-Unit Campsites Maintained

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

Peaks Ranger District	3
Mormon Lake Ranger District	2
Mogollon Rim Ranger District	2
Red Rock Ranger District	4
Total: 11	

Picnic Areas	17
Rental Cabins	3

Miles of Trail	815
Number of Trailheads	131
Miles of Forest Road	5,572

Volunteer Information

Ranger District	Volunteers	Hours	Value
Red Rock	716	43,511	\$590,879
Peaks/Mormon Lake	908	9,474	\$105,420
Mogollon Rim	506	8,888	\$114,498
Totals	2,130	61,873	\$810,797

Law Enforcement:

Incident Reports	1525
Warnings Issued	389
Violations Issued	518
Arrests	79
Public and Other Assists	164
Public Contacts	8000
Total Value of Violations Issued	\$ 105,584.00
Total Value Of Fines Collected	\$ 63024.00
Cannabis Plots Eradicated	1
Damage to Government Property	\$ 7,150.00

Stewardship

Acres of Invasive Weed Treatment	1,435
Acres of Soil and Water Improvement	175
Acres of Wildlife Habitat Restored or Enhanced	900
Miles of Stream Habitat Restored	0

This report was prepared by Brienne Untalan and Hailey Lankford

Fire and Fuels Management

*Note: WUI refers to the Wildland Urban Interface

	Target	Accomplishment
WUI Initial-Entry Broadcast Burns	5,606 acres	6,527 acres
WUI Slash Pile Prescribed Burns	2,341 acres	2,856 acres
Thinning Treatments – WUI and NON WUI	1,728 acres	1,867 acres
NON-WUI Initial-Entry Broadcast Burns + WUI and NON-WUI Maintenance Burns	7,167 acres	9,184 acres
Total	16,842 acres	20,434 acres

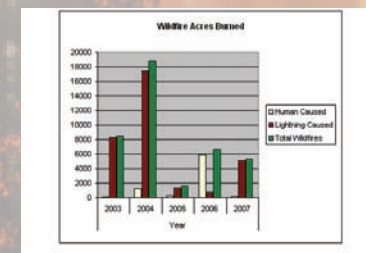
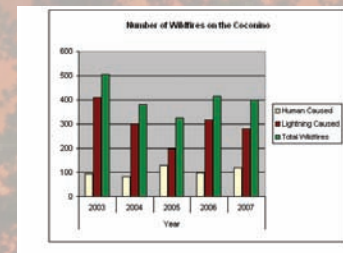
Wildfires

Number of Wildfires

Human Caused	121
Lightning	280
Total: 401	

Wildfire Acres Burned

Human Caused	229
Lightning	5,120
Total: 5,349	



Bargaman Fire was the 1st Wildland Fire Use on the Coconino.



CONTACT US

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

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

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

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