

Decision Notice
& Finding of No Significant Impact
DeMotte Campground Reconstruction Project

**USDA Forest Service
North Kaibab Ranger District, Kaibab National Forest
Coconino County, State**

An environmental assessment (EA) for the DeMotte Campground Reconstruction Project is available for public review at the Kaibab National Forest, North Kaibab Ranger Station, 430 South Main Street, Fredonia, Arizona 86022-0248.

Location

DeMotte Campground is located on the North Kaibab Ranger District on the Kaibab National Forest, Coconino County, Arizona, approximately 45 miles south of Fredonia, Arizona - T35N R2E Section 24. The project area is 10 acres in size.

Decision

It is my decision to select Alternative 2 (EA pages 8-9) and implement its proposed treatments, based on the results of the analysis documented in the DeMotte Campground EA, and in consideration of the content and context of public comments.

Decision Rationale

I selected Alternative 2 because it best meets the purpose and need for the action identified in the Environmental Assessment. Alternative 2 will reconstruct degraded facilities to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and provide for continued public safety by removing existing hazard trees in the campground. No treatments would occur under Alternative 1.

DeMotte Campground was constructed in 1964. There have been no major facility upgrades since the campground was constructed. Thus, the campground sewer system, water system, picnic tables, and toilets are in a deteriorated condition. The parking spurs and interior road system does not accommodate the typical recreational vehicles visitors use today. In addition, the toilets, campsites, picnic tables, fire grills, amphitheater, and entrance station do not meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

Additional resource concerns include: 1) soil compaction and user created trails throughout the site are negatively affecting existing vegetation, and 2) many insects and pathogens are stressing the trees within the project area. The most common pathogens include: Western Spruce Budworm, *Choristoneura occidentalis*; Shoestring root rot, *Armillaria ostoyae*; Dwarf mistletoe, *Arceuthobium vaginatu subsp. cryptopodum*; and, Annosus Root Rot, *Heterobasidion annosum*. It is the two root rot pathogens, *A. ostoyae* and *H. annosum*, which are of greatest concern since

they have been detected in all hazard tree failures in this campground over the past 14 years (DeMotte Campground Silviculture Report).

Alternative 2 does the best job of reconstructing degraded facilities and providing ADA access. Alternative 2 will reconstruct all facilities to ADA standards; reconstruct the campsites to fit the contour- thus reducing erosion; increase the number of campsites; and improve access for large recreational vehicles. This would not happen under Alternative 1.

Alternative 2 does the best job of reducing the risk of injury to people and their property, damage to site structures, and the level of root disease infection to regeneration by removing all spruce and subalpine fir over 12 inches DBH; reducing the food base of the fungus by removing stumps during site reconstruction; reforesting with less susceptible conifers; and maintaining vigorous tree growth. This would not happen under Alternative 1.

Based upon my review of all alternatives, I have decided to implement Alternative #2 (Selected Alternative). Alternative 2 proposes the following activities to meet the purpose and need:

1. Replace existing vault toilet and existing flush toilet with new vault toilets. The new toilets will be barrier-free for access. Barrier-free access is defined as “facilities designed to accommodate people of all ages, genders, sizes and physical abilities.”
2. Construct a new barrier-free amphitheater.
3. Reconstruct interior access roads, parking spurs, and interior pathways and provide barrier-free access from parking spurs to campsites.
4. Increase number of campsites from 23 to approximately 50. Each new site would have barrier-free fixtures.
5. Provide potable drinking water. Also construct a new water line to a fill station from the existing 40,000-gallon water tank. This tank would store water to be used for fire protection for the campground and adjacent Kaibab Lodge.
6. Relocate campground host site.
7. Construct barrier-free check-in station.
8. Construct a new group area site, including a barrier-free covered ramada, picnic tables, potable water tank, fire grills, and vault toilet.
9. Remove existing hazardous spruce and fir trees in accordance with the “Hazard Tree Management and Marking Guidelines on the North Kaibab Ranger District”. Approximately 400 trees ranging in size from 1” to 26” in diameter would be felled and removed from the campground. Only those ponderosa pine trees (various sizes) directly in the path of construction would be removed.
10. Construct a wooden pole fence around the campground to keep cattle out.
11. Replace existing aboveground power line with a buried line.
12. Abandon the existing leach line in place and construct a holding tank to which the campground hosts’ site will be plumbed into.

Reconstruction of DeMotte Campground complies with the Kaibab National Forest Land Management Plan (as amended 6/96). Management Direction (Chapter 4) gives the following goals: “Manage the recreation resource and provide facilities to increase recreation opportunities for a wide variety of developed and dispersed experiences” and “manage facilities and use to minimize resource degradation, and to provide for the safety and well being of the public while in the Forest.” In addition, in Ecosystem Management Area 21, the Forest Plan management

direction is the reconstruction or replacement of substandard facilities in the following public sector developed sites: 3. DeMotte Campground (KNF Land Management Plan, page 109).

Alternatives Considered (EA, page 10-11)

In addition to the proposed alternative, I considered one other alternative. A comparison of these alternatives can be found in the EA on page 13 (Table 1. Alternatives Comparison).

Alternative #1: No Action: Under the No Action alternative, current management plans would continue to guide management of the project area. The Forest Service would continue to deal with health and safety issues within the campground; but none of the existing facilities would comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Alternatives Eliminated from Detailed Study (EA, page 10)

Close the facilities permanently: This alternative would close the facilities on a permanent basis. This alternative was dropped from detailed analysis because DeMotte Campground has many advantages including proximity to: Kaibab Lodge, the North Rim Country Store Gas Station, the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park, developed scenic viewpoints and trailhead accesses. Demotte Campground serves as an overflow campground when the National Park Service campground is full at the North Rim.

Construct DeMotte II Recreation Area: The Kaibab National Forest Land Management Plan lists activities for preparing and advertising a prospectus for constructing, operating, and maintaining a new DeMotte II Recreation Area (campground) by the private sector. DeMotte II would be constructed in Ecosystem Management Area 22, approximately 23 miles north of DeMotte Campground. This alternative would close the existing DeMotte Campground, and through the private sector, construct a new campground. In the early 1990s, the District identified potential sites, and began a preliminary economic-viability analysis to determine whether or not a new campground was viable. Based upon raw construction costs and estimated projected gross annual income, the District determined that the potential for the construction of a new campground by the private sector was not economical at the time. Given this, and the recent fluctuation in the tourist industry due to past and present world events, this alternative was dropped from detailed analysis.

Mitigation Measures and Design Criteria (EA, pages 11-12)

Included in the design of Alternative #2 are the following applicable standards and guidelines from the Kaibab National Forest Plan, as amended. These measures have been successfully used on past projects similar to those listed here to ensure quality in the implementation of a project and to reduce the affect of an activity on other resources.

Vegetation Resources:

- Disturbed areas will be seeded with native species in order to quickly re-establish ground cover. The Forest Botanist and Landscape Architect will provide input for the species mix.
- Ensure sanitation timber prescriptions are consistent with the “Hazard Tree Management and Marking Guidelines on the North Kaibab Ranger District”.

- The application of appropriate Best Management Practices is expected to reduce nonpoint sources of pollution from sediments to levels compatible with water quality standards. Specific mitigation methods would be incorporated in the timber sale contract.
- To protect water quality, several specific mitigation activities will be universally applied, including: a) one-end suspension of all skidded logs and biomass material; b) after landings have served sale needs, the purchaser will ditch, rip or slope the log landings to permit drainage, infiltration and dispersion of water; c) all log landings and/or disposal sites will be located outside view areas unless otherwise agreed to by the Forest Service; d) use of existing skid trails and log landings will be emphasized to minimize disturbance; e) water bars will be constructed on all skid trails, or in lieu of water bars, backblading of skid trails will be done after timber harvest to help control erosion; and, f) skid trail layout will be agreed to in advance by the Sale Administrator and Purchaser.
- All residual vegetation and improvements will be protected to the extent practicable, employing directional felling, stage felling and skidding. Protection of improvements and residual vegetation will be a requirement in the timber sale contract.

Soils and Watershed:

- Ensure that management practices and the silvicultural prescription enhance or maintain long-term soil productivity and do not promote soil instability.

Wildlife Resources:

- A Limited Operating Period (LOP) from **March 1 to August 15**, inclusive, will be in effect for all operations and activities within ¼ mile of active nest trees for northern goshawks.
- If a new pair of northern goshawks or nesting goshawks are located prior to or during project implementation, the LOP will be imposed and the District Wildlife Biologist will be consulted to determine whether or not a nest area or Post Fledgling Area (PFA) should be identified.
- Kaibab bladderpod and Kaibab paintbrush plants will be protected to the extent practicable.
- The application of Best Management Practices is expected to prevent transportation of noxious and invasive weeds to or from the project area.

Cultural Resources:

- All eligible or unevaluated sites will be marked for avoidance by the District Heritage Specialist prior to the initiation of construction project activities within the DeMotte Campground Reconstruction area.

Visual and Recreation:

- Locate log landings outside visually sensitive areas. Do not locate in areas within the campground that are visible from Highway 67, DeMotte Park meadows, or along the adjacent Kaibab Lodge permit boundary.

- Complete tree removal and slash treatment (vegetation management activities) prior to reconstruction of the campground facilities. Additional trees may be removed during construction of campground facilities; however, this work will be the responsibility of the recreation site contractor.
- Acceptable slash treatments are removal, chipping, piling and burning (if this can be implemented prior to campground reconstruction).
- A Forest Service representative will implement an erosion control measures to minimize soil erosion and stormwater pollution during vegetation management and site reconstruction. Prepare a stormwater pollution prevention plan and apply for a permit with Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.
- Minimize resource damage and recreation impacts from increased dispersed camping (resulting from the campground being closed during construction) by: developing and implementing a communication plan which would address news releases, timely information at visitor contact points, signing the entrance to the campground with alternative camping site information, a projected timeline, increase patrols, and visitor contacts in the area.
- Plant ponderosa pine trees or other native plants where needed to provide screening between sites, between the campground and adjacent Kaibab Lodge, or along the east side of the campground visible from Highway 67.
- If trees are marked prior to closing the campground, place marks on the side facing away from interior campground roads, campsites, and other facilities.

Minimize dust, construction noise, and disturbance to adjacent Kaibab Lodge facilities by watering roads, campsites, or other construction areas, and not beginning work before 8 a.m. and not working after 7 p.m. during the operating season.

Public Involvement and Scoping (EA, page 9)

The need for this action first arose in November 1991 during a Functional Assistance Trip to DeMotte Campground by representatives of the District and the Region Three Forest Pathologist. A proposal to replace old facilities with barrier-free facilities was listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions on 1st quarter of 2003. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during scoping 02/28 – 04/01/2004. In addition, as part of the public involvement process, the agency mailed out 60 scoping letters. As a result of this activity, the North Kaibab Ranger District received 4 letters and/or e-mails. Three of the comments were in support of the proposed activities and the fourth one concerned a range issue.

Using the comments from the public, other agencies, the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, and Hopi Tribe (see *Issues* section), the interdisciplinary team identified several comments regarding the effects of the proposed action. No significant issues were identified during project scoping.

A list of non-significant issues and reasons regarding their categorization as non-significant may be found in the project record.

The DeMotte Campground legal notice and opportunity to comment announcement and EA were sent to interested parties on July 2, 2004. The Notice and Comment Period ended on August 9, 2004. The Forest received one electronic comment letter. The letter was supportive and did not include any substantive comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Context

The geographic and social extent of the environmental effects of the proposed activities, considered either singly or cumulatively, are limited to the locality on which they occur and to the specific people interested in the specific resources. The project is a site-specific set of activities that by themselves do not have international, national, region-wide, or statewide importance. A possible regional effect is that the timber might be transported beyond the local area for initial processing. This limited effect would supply benefits both locally and regionally.

Intensity

The severity of the environmental effects of the proposed project, considered alone or cumulatively with others, were tested against ten criteria listed in the NEPA regulations 40 CFR 1508.27.

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. The anticipated environmental effects and their intensity have been disclosed for each alternative in Chapter III of the EA. The severity of adverse impacts was viewed in the wider context of time and space.
2. Affects on public health or safety. Public health and safety were considered. No significant affect on public health or safety has been identified, nor is expected, from implementing the Selected Alternative.
3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area. This includes the geology, soils, potential vegetative complexes, wildlife species, and cultural resources. Unique characteristics of the general area include the North Rim - Grand Canyon National Park, Vermilion Cliff National Monument (BLM), Paria Canyon /Vermilion Cliff Wilderness and the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument (BLM). The limited scope and the spatial distinctness of the project area result in no indication that the Selected Alternative would have any effect on the above-mentioned areas.

There are no perennial streams within the boundaries of the analysis area, and the activities are not expected to have any appreciable effect on any perennial streams outside of the analysis area. There are no regulated floodplains, wetlands, or prime farmlands. No significant effects on unique characteristics of the geographic area are expected.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial. The activities associated with the Selected Alternative will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, and the effects are unlikely to be highly controversial in a scientific sense. Only supportive comments were received regarding the project, and no comments were received regarding project effects.
5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique risks or unknown risks. The planned construction activities are not unique to the Kaibab National Forest and other National Forests in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. The effects on wildlife and plant habitats, visual quality, recreation, cultural resources, soils, watershed, air quality, and socio-economic concerns have been analyzed to the best of the analysis team's present knowledge and disclosed in the EA. No unique risks are involved, and there is no basis for suspecting unknown risks.
6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. No precedents are established as a result of the decision made or of the Action Alternatives. The activities are specific to DeMotte Campground. Future proposals within the North Kaibab Ranger District or in surrounding areas can be analyzed on their merits and implemented or not—independent of the actions currently proposed.
7. Cumulatively significant effects of actions. Chapter III of the EA summarizes the potential cumulative effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions on particular resources. Based on this analysis, I have determined that there would be no significant cumulative effects association with the proposed alternatives.
8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible in the National Historic Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. DeMotte Campground has been professionally surveyed for heritage resources. No sites were found and any site located during the proposed activities will be protected by standard protection measures.
9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Possible effects on federally listed species and on Forest Service sensitive plant and wildlife species were analyzed and evaluated. That analysis is included in the Biological Assessment and Evaluation for Threatened and Endangered wildlife and plant species. No significant negative effects are foreseen on any species.
10. Legality of the action. None of the alternatives would violate Federal, State, or local laws or regulations imposed for the protection of the environment. After considering information from resource professionals, I have determined that the Selected Alternative is in compliance with the National Forest Management Act of 1976.

Additionally, there are no known significant irreversible resource commitments or irretrievable loss of timber production, wildlife habitats, soil productivity, or water quality.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

The Selected Alternative is fully consistent with the KNF LMP. The planned activities will move the existing conditions of DeMotte Campground in the direction of the desired condition and accomplish recreation objectives (EA, page 8).

These findings are based upon the following rationale:

National Forest Management Act

1. Soil, slope or other watershed conditions will not be irreversibly damaged.
2. Protection will be provided for streams and stream banks. Water temperatures and sedimentation will not be adversely increased (36 CFR 219.27(e)).
3. Prescribed treatments for all stands proposed are designed to conserve soil and water resources and not allow significant or permanent impairment of the productivity of the land (36 CFR 219.27(a)(1)).
4. All stands proposed for treatment with timber production objectives are on lands suitable for timber production (36 CFR 219.27(c)(1)).
5. Treatments are consistent with multiple-use objectives established for the project area as they apply to the portions of 36 CFR 219.27 not specifically addressed above, visual: resource protection, vegetative manipulation, silvicultural practices, uneven-aged management, riparian areas, soil and water, and diversity.
6. Stands selected for treatment have an appropriate suitability classification in the Kaibab National Forest Land Management Plan (36 CFR 219.14).
7. NOTE: There are no regeneration prescriptions planned for this project, therefore statements concerning regeneration prescriptions are not applicable on this project.

Heritage Resource Surveys

The surveys were completed and concurrence from SHPO has been received. The report is contained in the project record and indicates that cultural resources will be protected.

Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species

Informal consultation has been completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The District Wildlife Biologist has prepared a Biological Evaluation Assessment to reflect the effects of Alternative #2 activities on Proposed, Endangered and Threatened Sensitive (PETS) species. There were no effects on PETS species. The Biological Evaluation Assessment and associated documents are in the project record.

Implementation Date

This project may be implemented immediately after publication of the notice of decision in the *Arizona Daily Sun*.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This project is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12.

Information Contacts

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Steven E. Martinet at the North Kaibab Ranger District, P.O. Box 248 or 430 S. Main, Fredonia, AZ 86022, or by telephone at (928) 643-8163.

It is the policy of the Department of Agriculture that no person shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status in any program or activity conducted by the Department. Although ethnic minorities represent a high percentage of the population in the Southwest, there has been no evidence that the Selected Alternative would disproportionately affect any of these groups. The adverse effects of the alternative on such groups are not likely to appreciably exceed those of the general population. There is nothing that would indicate the Selected Alternative would have a disparate impact on any low-income populations. The Selected Alternative deals with vegetative management based upon resource conditions and capabilities and is applied regardless of a person's ethnicity or income level.

Based on my review of the EA, the project, and resource concerns, I have determined that these actions are not a major federal action, individually or cumulatively, and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore an environmental impact statement is not needed. This determination is based upon information contained in the EA.

Jill Leonard
District Ranger
North Kaibab Ranger District
Kaibab National Forest

Date