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Purpose of the Plan

The Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) defines the long-term direction for managing the Tonto National Forest. The purpose of the Forest Plan is to provide for multiple use and sustained yield of goods and services from the Forest in a way that maximizes long-term net public benefits in an environmentally sound manner [36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 219.1(a)]. To accomplish this, the Forest Plan:

Briefly describes the major public issues and management concerns pertinent to the Forest and how each one is addressed in the Forest Plan.

Briefly summarizes the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) including the existing management situation, projected future use and supply conditions.

Establishes long-range policies, goals, and objectives, and contains the specific management prescriptions planned to meet the policies and to achieve the multiple-use goals and objectives.

Specifies the vicinity, timing, and standards and guidelines for proposed management practices.

Establishes monitoring and evaluation requirements needed so that direction is carried out to determine how well outputs and effects were predicted.

Will ordinarily be revised on a 10-year cycle or at least every 15 years.

Preparation of the Forest Plan is required by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA), as amended by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA). Assessment of its environmental impacts is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the implementing regulations of NFMA [36 CFR 219]. The Forest Plan replaces all previous resource management plans prepared for the Forest. All subsequent activities affecting these lands, including budget proposals, must be based on the Forest Plan [36 CFR 219.10(e)].

Land management prescriptions and standards and guidelines are a statement of the Plan's management direction. Projected outputs, services and rates of implementation are, however, dependent on the annual budget process. Implementation schedules can be changed to reflect annual budget proposals and the Plan amended accordingly after appropriate public notification.

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Relationship to  
Other Planning Levels

Development of a Forest Plan occurs within the framework of Forest Service regional and national planning. The RPA Program sets the national direction and output levels for National Forest System lands based on suitability and capability information from each Forest Service Region. Each Region disaggregates its share of the national production levels among the Forests of the Region. This distribution is based on the detailed site-specific information gathered at the Forest level.

Each Forest Plan, in turn, either validates or provides a basis for changing production levels assigned by the Region. Activities and projects are planned and implemented by the Forest to carry out direction developed in the Forest Plan. Information from all Forest Plans in the Region are used in developing and revising the Regional Guide. Upon completion of the Regional Guide, a review is made to determine if amendments to Forest Plans are necessary.

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Analysis that supports the Forest Plan is contained in the accompanying Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Therefore, the Forest Plan and the EIS are companion documents. The EIS describes alternatives considered in arriving at the proposed Forest Plan and assesses environmental effects of implementing the Plan and its alternatives. Supporting documentation of the planning process is contained in the planning records on file at the Tonto National Forest Supervisor's Office in Phoenix, Arizona. The planning records are available for public review.

The Forest Plan either supersedes or replaces all previous resource or land use management plans prepared for the Forest—specifically the Forest and District Multiple-Use Plans. All future permits, contracts, and other instruments for the use and occupancy of the National Forest System lands must be consistent with this Plan. In addition, all subsequent administrative activities affecting the Forest, including budget proposals, will be based on the Plan [36 CFR 219.10(e)].

The final EIS will be used for tiering [40 CFR 1502.20 and 1508.28]. Tiering means that, if needed, future environmental documents for projects based on the Plan will only summarize or incorporate by reference issues discussed in the EIS. Environmental documents for those projects will focus on site-specific issues, concerns, and opportunities unique to the project. Environmental assessments will not be prepared for projects that have been found to have limited context and intensity [40 CFR 1508.27(a) and (b)], and produce little or no environmental effects, individually or cumulatively to either the biological or physical components of the human environment [40 CFR 1508.14] (FSM 1951.2) or have been adequately addressed in other environmental documents, including the EIS associated with the Forest Plan.

The Plan was modeled for implementation in 1981. Actual implementation occurred in Fiscal Year 1986. Period 1, therefore, can be thought of as shifting from 1981-1985 to 1986-1995. The other periods will also shift accordingly.

Investment projects, because of size and complexity, are phased in over a period of 3 to 5 years. For example, timber sales to be sold in 1984 are normally inventoried and examined in 1982, marked and cruised in 1983, and appraised and sold in 1984. Roads, campgrounds, wildlife habitat projects and grazing systems are phased in the same way. The number and type of disciplines needed in the organization are also tied directly to these projects—foresters, wildlife biologists, and engineers. In addition, there are many existing contracts or permits for timber sales, special uses, and grazing. Duration of these contracts is from several months to several years.

When the Forest Plan was implemented in Fiscal Year 1986, time was needed to bring activities into compliance with the Forest Plan depending on the type of project. Most operation and maintenance activities, projects in the first year of development, new special use proposals and transfers of existing permits were brought into compliance with the Forest Plan within the first year of implementation. Projects in the second to fifth year of implementation as well as many contractual obligations were continued as planned.

If a particular provision of this Forest Plan, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, is held invalid, the remainder of the Forest Plan and the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

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## Planning Process

The planning process specified in NFMA regulations [36 CFR 219.12] was followed in development of the proposed action. The planning process uses the interdisciplinary (ID) approach. An ID team was formed of professionals with diverse backgrounds in the physical, biological, economic, and social sciences. The ID team approach ensured that the prescriptions and in-depth knowledge of different specialists were integrated into a common management plan. Specialty needs were identified, and persons qualified by experience or academic training were used.

The NFMA planning process represents a logical, rational, and easily tracked approach to natural resource decision-making. The planning actions as described in the NFMA regulations [36 CFR 219(b)-(k)] and used in this Forest planning effort are:

- Identification of purpose and need
- Development of planning criteria
- Inventory data and information collection
- Analysis of the management situation
- Formulation of alternatives
- Estimation of effects of alternatives
- Evaluation of alternatives
- Preferred alternative recommendation (Proposed Action)
- Plan approval
- Monitoring and evaluation

The planning principles described in the NFMA regulations [36 CFR 219.1(b)] were integrated throughout the process. These principles are:

The National Forests are ecosystems and their management for goods and services requires an awareness of the interrelationships among plants, animals, soil, water, air, and other environmental factors within such ecosystems.

This principle was the foundation of the planning process. Planning models, prescriptions, benchmarks, and alternatives were formulated considering all components of the Forest. Some components were emphasized in some of the analyses but minimum standards for all other components were always met.

Consideration of the relative values of all renewable resources including the relationship of mineral resources to these renewable resources.

Both quantifiable and non-quantifiable values were evaluated for alternatives and benchmarks. These values are displayed and discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 4, and Appendix B of the EIS.

Establishment of goals and objectives for the sustained yield of products and services resulting from multiple-use management without impairment of the productivity of the land.

Goals, objectives, and the levels of sustained outputs are contained in Chapter 4 of this Plan.

Protection and, where appropriate, improvement of the quality of renewable resources.

Preservation of important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage.

Protection and preservation of the inherent right of freedom of American Indians to believe, express, and exercise their traditional religions.

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Provision for the safe use and enjoyment of Forest resources by the public.

Protection of all forest and rangeland resources from depredations by forest pests, using ecologically compatible means.

Establishment of quantitative and qualitative standards and guidelines for land and resource planning and management.

These principles were integrated into the standards and guidelines for management prescriptions found in Chapter 4 of this Plan. Impacts and effects of the proposed management prescriptions are described in Chapter 4 of the EIS. The management situation for all resources and uses is described in the AMS on file at Forest offices and summarized in Chapter 3 of this Plan.

Coordination with land and resource planning efforts of other Federal agencies, State, and local governments, Indian tribes, and adjacent private landowners.

Extensive coordination was done throughout the planning process. These efforts are described in Chapter 1 and Appendix A of the EIS. Chapter 6 of the EIS lists entities receiving copies of the EIS and Forest Plan.

A systematic, interdisciplinary approach to ensure coordination and integration of planning activities for multiple-use management.

The ID team that developed the Forest Plan is listed in Chapter 5 of the EIS.

Early and frequent public participation.

The public was involved throughout the process. A detailed description of Public involvement is found in Appendix A of the EIS.

Management of National Forest System lands in a manner that is sensitive to economic efficiency.

Economic efficiency of the alternatives and proposed Forest Plan was evaluated throughout the process. Chapter 2 and Appendix B of the EIS describe the economic efficiency analysis.

Responsiveness to changing conditions in the land and changing social and economic demands of the American people.

Demand considerations and social and economic effects of the alternatives and Forest Plan are found in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the EIS and in the AMS.

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Organization  
of the Plan

Chapter 2 of the Forest Plan describes the issues and concerns addressed in the EIS, and how the Forest Plan responds to them.

Chapter 3 summarizes the resource situation by describing the existing situation, future demand trend, production potential and conclusions about the adequacy of current management from the AMS.

Chapter 4 details the mission, goals, desired condition of the Forest in Period 5 objectives, and describes management direction and prescriptions and associated resource management standards and guidelines.

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Chapter 5 is the Monitoring Plan.

Management Area maps keyed to the prescriptions in Chapter 4 accompanies the Forest Plan. Several appendixes provide additional explanatory material.

A glossary is provided to define terms commonly used in discussing National Forest resources.

How the Plan  
Will Be Used

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Forest Plan implementation described in the NFMA regulations [36 CFR 219.10(e)] require, subject to valid existing rights, all outstanding and future permits, contracts, cooperative agreements, and other instruments for occupancy and use of affected lands to be consistent with the Forest Plan. As the Forest Plan is implemented, the time needed to bring activities into compliance with the Forest Plan will vary depending on the type of activity. Investment projects, because of their size and complexity, are phased over a period of three to five years. Projects in the second to fifth year of implementation as well as many contractual obligations will continue as planned. Most operation and maintenance activities, projects in the first year of development, new special proposals, and transfers of existing permits were brought into compliance with the Forest Plan within the first year of implementation.

The Forest Plan is designed to guide the management of the Forest until it is revised. It will be revised at least every 15 years. Provision for revision or amendment of the Forest Plan is specified in the regulations for implementation of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 [36 CFR 219.10(f) and (g)].

The Forest Plan and EIS will guide all subsequent project implementation and the EIS will be used for tiering of project proposals [40 CFR 1508.28]. Tiering means that, if needed, future environmental documents for projects based on the Forest Plan will only summarize or incorporate by reference the issues discussed in the EIS. Environmental documents for those projects will focus on site-specific issues, concerns, and opportunities unique to the project. Environmental assessments will not be prepared for projects that have been found to have limited context and intensity [40 CFR 1508.27(a) and (b)], to produce little or no effects, individually or cumulatively, to either the biological or physical components of the human environment [40 CFR 1508.14] (FSM 1951.2), or to have been adequately addressed in other environmental documents, including the accompanying EIS.

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