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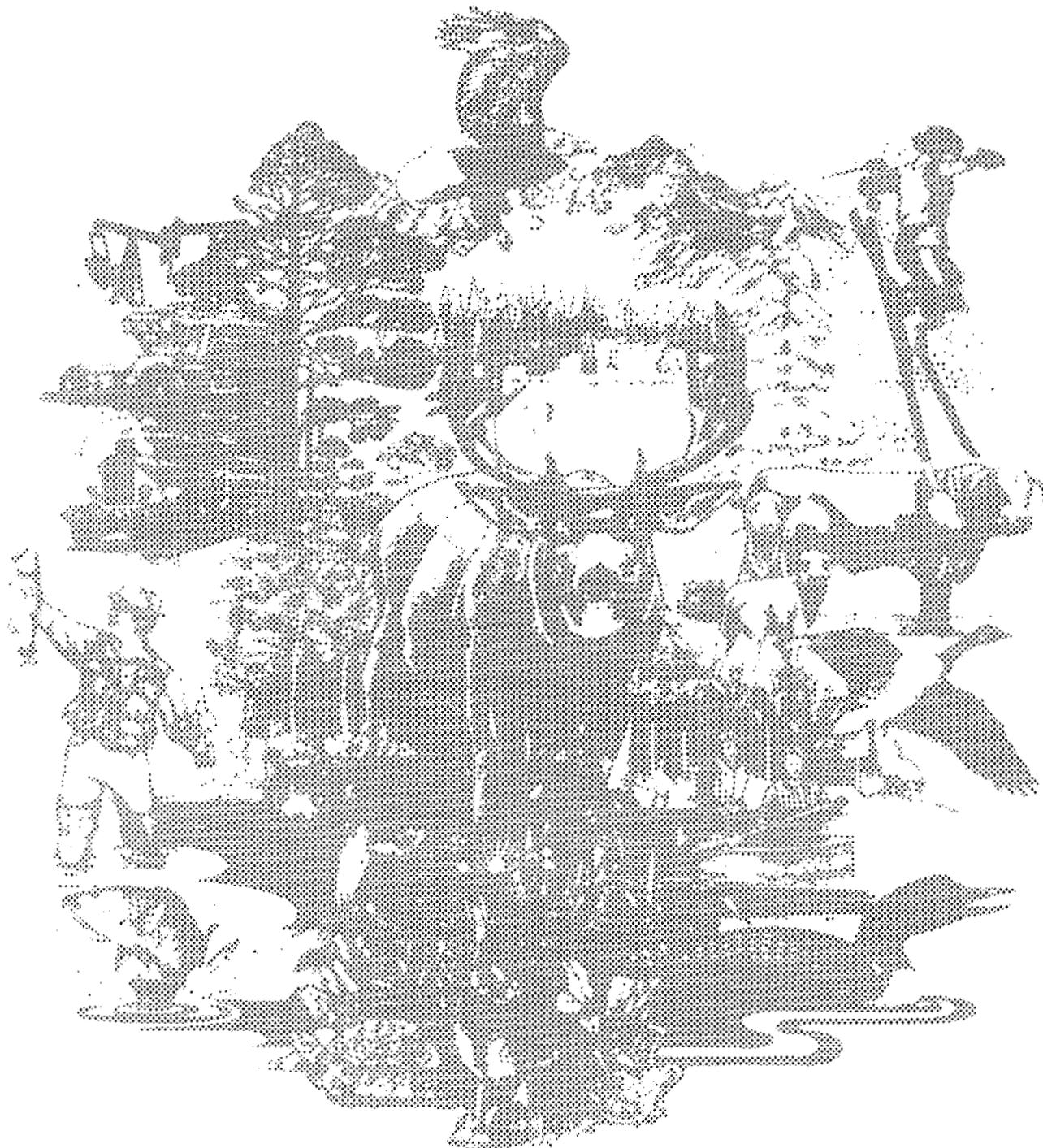
Forest
Service

Southwestern
Region



Final Environmental Impact Statement

For Amendment of Forest Plans



cover 1

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Forest
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Southwestern
Region

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Albuquerque, NM 87102-0084
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File Code: 1920/1950

Date: October 1995

Dear Reviewer:

This is your copy of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Amendment of Forest Plans in the Southwestern Region. The final environmental impact statement discloses the effects of amending forest plans in the Southwestern Region to include management direction for protection and recovery of the Mexican spotted owl and for implementing an ecosystem approach for management of northern goshawk habitats.

The final environmental impact statement addresses six alternatives considered in detail. Alternative G is the Forest Service preferred alternative. Alternative G was developed in response to comments received on the draft environmental impact statement and the latest scientific information on habitat needs for recovery of the Mexican spotted owl.

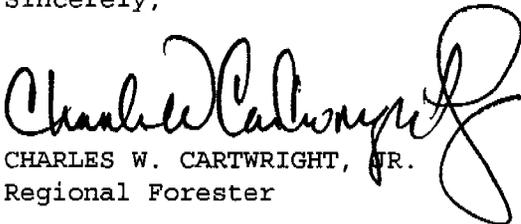
Normally, the Forest Service files a record of decision simultaneously with final environmental impact statements. However, in this case, a 30 day comment period is being provided between filing the final environmental impact statement and the record of decision. The comment period will provide you an opportunity to respond to new information about habitat needs for recovery of the Mexican spotted owl and how it was used in Alternative G. Recovery information and Alternative G were not available in the draft environmental impact statement and I would like you to comment on them before I make a final decision.

Please address your comments to:

Director of Ecosystem Management Planning
USDA Forest Service
517 Gold Avenue S.W.
Albuquerque, NM 87102

To be considered in preparation of the record of decision, comments must be received in our office by the close of business on

Sincerely,



CHARLES W. CARTWRIGHT, JR.
Regional Forester



Caring for the Land and Serving People



FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Amendment of Forest Plans
Forest Service - Southwestern Region
Arizona and New Mexico
October 1995

Type of Action: Administrative
Lead Agency: USDA Forest Service
Responsible Official: Charles W. Cartwright, Jr., Regional Forester
For Further Information: Director of Ecosystem Management Planning
USDA Forest Service
517 Gold Ave., SW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102
(505) 842-3212

Abstract: A preferred alternative and 5 other alternatives are described in detail and compared for the amendment of forest plans in the Southwestern Region to include northern goshawk and Mexican spotted owl direction. Alternative B as described in the Scoping Report was dropped (see Chapter 2). Appendix E contains detailed information about the specific standards and guidelines for each alternative. Alternatives are:

- A. This alternative is the no action alternative as required by the National Environmental Policy Act regulations and serves as the baseline of comparison for the action alternatives.
- C. This alternative amends the forest plans with new standards and guidelines per FSM 2676, ID#2 and RM-217.
- D. This alternative amends forest plans using northern goshawk standards and guidelines suggested by the Arizona and New Mexico state game agencies. Mexican spotted owl (MSO) standards and guidelines were developed in concert with Fish and Wildlife Service to response to the MSO Recovery Plan.
- E. This alternative amends forest plans using standards and guidelines suggested by Applied Ecosystems, Inc., a consulting firm located in northern Arizona.
- F. This alternative sets up an ecosystem demonstration area in the mixed conifer vegetation type on the Apache National Forest; otherwise it is exactly like Alternative C.
- G. The alternative amends forest plans using northern goshawk standards and guidelines that are based on a scientific report known as *Management Recommendations for Northern Goshawk in Southwestern U.S.* (RM-217). Mexican spotted owl (MSO) standards and guidelines were developed in concert with Fish and Wildlife Service to response to the MSO Recovery Plan.

A Record of Decision based on this final environmental impact statement will be issued no less than 30 days after the Notice of Availability appears in the *Federal Register*. Because this is an agency administrative action, it will be subject to appeal per regulation (36 CFR 217).

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