

CARSON FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT 10 OUTFITTER/GUIDE CAPACITY ON THE JICARILLA RANGER DISTRICT

DECISION NOTICE AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

USDA Forest Service; Carson National Forest; Jicarilla Ranger District
Rio Arriba County, New Mexico

This Decision Notice documents my decision to amend the Carson Forest Plan to incorporate outfitter/guide direction on the Jicarilla Ranger District. It describes the decision and rationale, citizen participation, alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed study, alternatives considered in detail, rights of appeal and implementation.

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Based upon the analysis, it is my decision to approve Alternative E. Alternative E will:

- Establish upper limits of service days and outfitters allowed to operate on the Jicarilla Ranger District. Total allowable hunter outfitter/guide and service days on the Jicarilla Ranger District will be:

Species	Outfitters/Guides	Service Days
mule deer	10	500
elk	7	300
mountain lion	7	350
Barbary sheep	not limited at this time due to limited demand	not limited at this time due to limited demand

- If conditions warrant, the permitted outfitter/guide and service days can be adjusted up or down.
- Permits will be converted to "priority use permits" when possible. (Priority use permits are granted based upon acceptable performance for a two year period.)

Alternative E was selected because:

- It best achieves the multiple resource benefits and integrated resource management envisioned in the Carson National Forest Plan.
- This decision will conform with Interim Directives to the Forest Service Handbook on Special Uses (FSH 2709.11) which gives direction on outfitting and guiding policy on National Forest System Lands.
- It will decrease user conflicts, satisfy the needs of the public who desire a quality commercially guided hunt and give the District a better control on the quality of outfitters permitted.
- It gives the district better control of the number of outfitters permitted.
- Alternatives A, B and D were not chosen because they did not allow the District to work towards its Desired Future Condition of capacity service day limits.
- Alternative C was not chosen because it does not set any outfitter limits until the service days are utilized.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Consultation and public involvement was sought in 1990, 1991, 1994 and 1995 (11/1/90, 1/31/91, 5/16/91, 12/15/94 and Jan - March 1995). Two public meetings, press coverage and letters to interested parties afforded people an opportunity to comment (1/31/91, 2/10/91, 2/12/91, 2/13/91, 5/16/91, 5/19/91, 5/21/91 and 12/15/94). Two hundred and fifty-six (256) hunters commented on future outfitter/guide needs, forty-two (42) people attended two public meetings, six (6) letters have been received, and several comments were made in person or via telephone. Hunters were asked to give comments during the 1990-95 hunting seasons by District employees in the field. The comments received related to: Outfitter/guide operations behind locked gates, current and future capacity levels and the need for settling limits was questioned. Each comment was incorporated into the issues, addressed through other analysis, and/or beyond the scope of this project to address. An explanation of the comments and how they were dealt with is found in Section V of the Environmental Analysis.

ISSUES

Those comments that could not be readily addressed were grouped into "issues". Alternative ways were developed and analyzed to deal with the issues.

USER CONFLICTS: Possible user conflicts between guided and unguided big game hunters as the number of outfitters increases.

PUBLIC NEEDS: It is necessary to be able to meet the needs of the public who desire a quality commercially guided hunt.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAIL STUDY

Eliminate All Commercial Outfitting on the District. This alternative does not meet the Forest Plan objective.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN DETAIL

The alternatives include a no action alternative and four (4) alternatives that respond to the project objectives and issues.

ALTERNATIVE A (No Action)

Remain as is with unlimited outfitters and service days.

ALTERNATIVE B

Limit outfitters to existing numbers, 7 outfitters, and limit service days to current average use of 100 service days.

ALTERNATIVE C

Determine total allowable service days of 500 with unlimited number of outfitters until service days are used up.

ALTERNATIVE D

Limit number of outfitters to seven (7) with unlimited service days.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

This is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. This determination was made considering the following factors:

CONTEXT:

This is a local decision. It affects the Jicarilla Ranger District lands. It has no affect nationally, regionally or even Forest-wide.

INTENSITY:

- Beneficial and Adverse Impacts: As outlined in the assessment, neither the beneficial nor adverse impacts are significant.
 - Public Health and Safety: The action does not have a significant affect on the public health or safety.
 - Unique Characteristics: There are no unique characteristics in the area, such as, parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas.
 - Controversy of Effects: There is no disagreement among the experts as to the effects of this action.
 - Uncertainty and Risks: The effects of the action on the human environment contain no uncertain nor involve any unique or unknown risks.
- Precedent: This action sets no precedent for future action with significant effects; nor does it represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.
- Cumulative Affect: It is not reasonable to anticipate that this action, in conjunction with other actions, would cumulatively have significant affects.
 - Significant Scientific, Cultural or Historical Resources: This action will not adversely affect any districts, sites, highways, structures or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.
 - T&E Species: This action will not affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
 - Laws: This action does not violate Federal, State or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

APPEALS

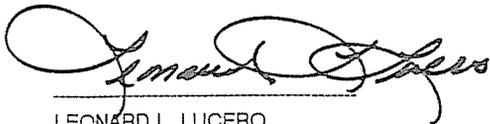
This decision is subject to appeal in accordance with 36 CFR 217. A Notice of Appeal must be in writing and clearly state that it is a Notice of Appeal being filed pursuant to 36 CFR 217. Appeals must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 217, "Content of Notice of Appeal" and must be filed with Regional Forester, Southwestern Region, 517 Gold Avenue, SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102-0084 within 45 days of the date of legal notice of this decision in The Taos News newspaper. A notice will also be published in the Farmington Daily Times.

IMPLEMENTATION

This decision can be implemented forty-five days after publication of the legal notice of this decision in The Taos News.

MORE INFORMATION

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact the District Ranger, Phil Settles, Jicarilla Ranger District, 664 East Broadway, Bloomfield, NM 87413, (505) 632-2956.



LEONARD L. LUCERO
Forest Supervisor, Carson National Forest

1/19/96
Date