



**U.S. Forest Service
Cibola National Forest and
National Grasslands**

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News Release

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Update on Forest Plan Revision

Albuquerque, New Mexico, February 22, 2016 – The Cibola NF is revising its 1985 Cibola Forest Plan, which is over 30 years old. Since last April, 40 governmental agencies have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be cooperators in the plan revision effort. These agencies have formed “Landscape Teams” around the four mountain districts - Mountainair, Sandia, Mt. Taylor, and Magdalena.

To-date, the following has been completed:

- an assessment of the conditions, trends, and risks to sustainability of the forest's resources, goods, and services;
- a review and consideration of public comments on the assessment and needs for change;
- a review and consideration of comments received on the draft desired conditions
- a review and consideration of comments received on the inventory and evaluation of lands that may be suitable for recommendation as wilderness; this task was accomplished with the assistance of the cooperating agency landscape teams;
- a two month effort that evaluated, for wilderness character, the inventoried areas of the Cibola NF that may be suitable for wilderness. The wilderness character findings and recommendations from the cooperating agency landscape teams and FS staff are currently under review by the Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee, comprised of Forest Supervisor, District Rangers, and Staff Officers.

Future plans:

- The Cibola NF will meet with cooperating agencies to develop draft plan components (desired conditions, standards, guidelines, management areas, and so forth) and alternatives, incorporating the results of the evaluation for wilderness character.
- Cibola FS staff will prepare a preliminary draft plan and alternatives for review and comment by the cooperating agency landscape teams.

- The preliminary draft plan and alternatives will be released to the public for review and comment in late June or July. The comment period will be at least 30 days. Public meetings will be held on the four mountain districts at this time.
- Public comments on the preliminary draft plan and alternatives will be reviewed and considered by the Cibola NF staff and landscape teams before releasing a draft plan and draft environmental impact statement in the late fall or winter of 2016. A ninety day comment period will be accompanied by a second round of public meetings.
- Public comments will be reviewed and considered by the Forest Plan Revision Steering Committee and landscape teams, responses will be drafted, and a final plan and final EIS will be released later in the summer of 2017. A sixty day objection period will follow the notice of availability of the final plan and final EIS. Objections will be responded to within 90 days of the close of the objection period. A decision document will follow the responses to objections. Implementation of the final plan follows the signing of the decision document, known as the record of decision (ROD).

Information and updates on Cibola NF forest plan revision can be found at http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/cibola/landmanagement/planning/?cid=FSBDEV3_065627

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