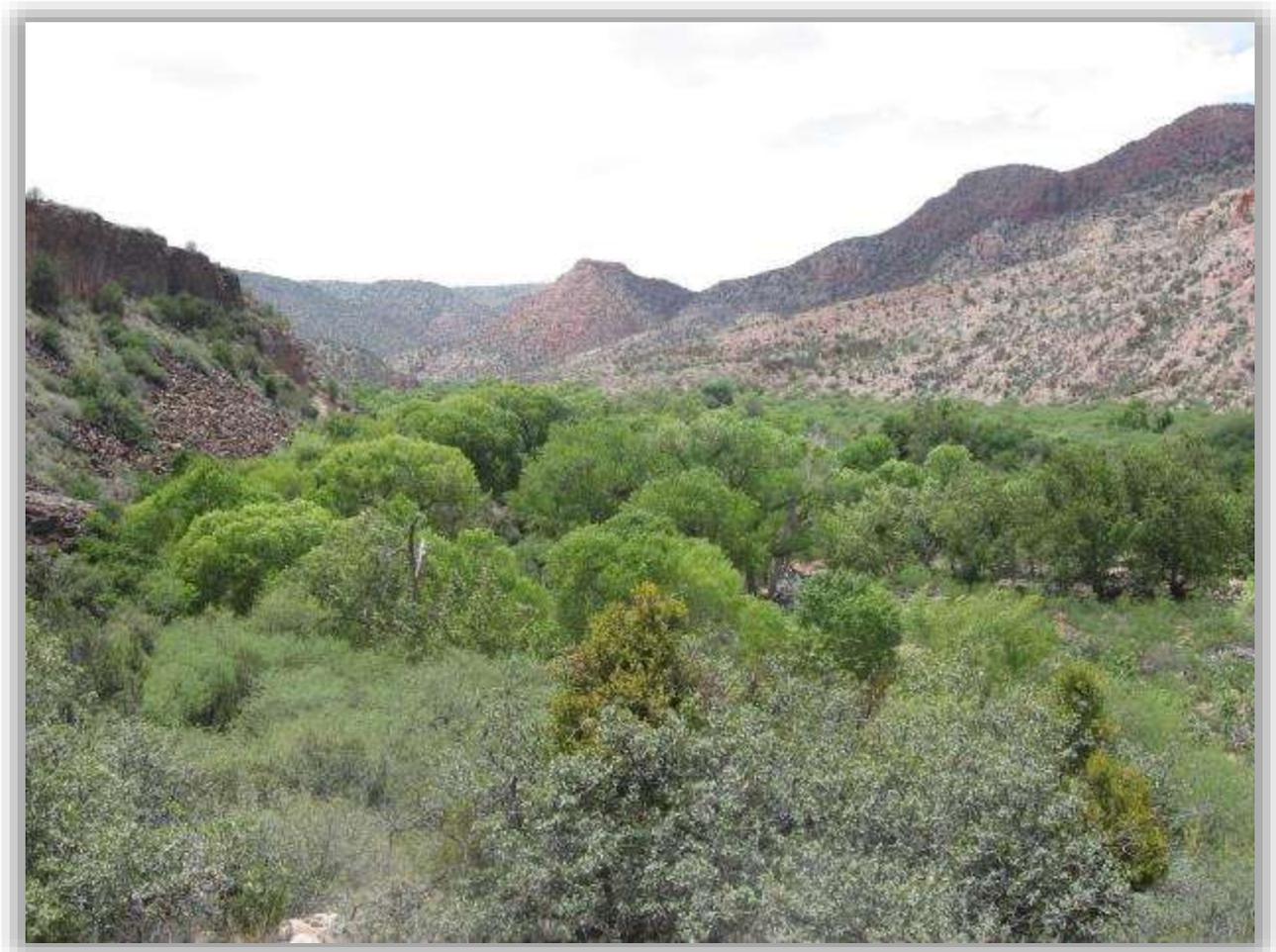


Chapter 8. Additional Plan Direction



Sycamore Canyon Wilderness

Introduction

In addition to the plan decisions (i.e., plan components) outlined in the previous chapters, other direction exists which must be followed in implementing the plan. The direction found in this chapter addresses: (1) projects' consistency with the plan, (2) changes to the plan, and (3) other vital documents which must be followed to implement the plan.

Project Consistency with the Plan

As required by the National Forest Management Act and the National Forest System Land Management Planning Rule, all projects and activities¹ authorized by the Forest Service must be consistent with decisions in the plan (i.e., desired conditions, objectives, standards, guidelines, special areas, suitability of areas, and monitoring). Projects are not required to be consistent with nonplan decisions such as: introduction, background, existing conditions, management

¹ Projects and activities as defined in 16 U.S.C. 1604(i); these include resource plan and permits, contracts, and other instruments for the use and occupancy of National Forest System lands.

approaches, community visions, glossary, possible actions, and information included purely for reference.

Where a proposed project or activity would not be consistent with a plan decision, the responsible official has the following options:

- To modify the proposal so that the project or activity will be consistent;
- To reject the proposal; or
- To amend the plan at the same time as the approval of the project or activity so that the project or activity is consistent with the plan as amended. The amendment may be limited to apply only to the project or activity.

Typically, projects or activities are developed specifically to achieve the desired conditions or objectives of the plan; however, some projects or activities may not necessarily be tied to any specific desired condition or objective in the plan (e.g., routine road maintenance, facility maintenance). In such cases, these may still be considered consistent with the plan if they do not prevent the attainment of these plan components; these projects and activities should be briefly evaluated for any conflicts with the plan's desired conditions and objectives. In implementation of the plan, projects are expected to comply with the plan's standards and guidelines, suitability, and management area direction. Early in the project planning process, these applicable plan components should be identified and documented to ensure consistency with the plan.

It is important to note that while the plan is to be used as direction for future projects, it is not expected that this new direction be used to reevaluate or change decisions that have been made under the previous land management plan. A smooth and gradual transition to the new plan is anticipated, rather than one that forces an immediate reexamination or modification of all projects, contracts, permits, and other activities that are already in progress. As new project decisions, contracts, permits, renewals, and other activities are considered, consistency with the new plan is expected.

The following paragraphs describe in greater detail how a project or activity is consistent with the plan components and the requirements for documenting consistency.

Plan Desired Conditions

Most projects and activities are developed specifically to maintain or move conditions toward one or many of the desired conditions of the plan; consequently, it is not likely that a project or activity can maintain or contribute to the attainment of all desired conditions. In addition, it should not be expected that, in every instance, a project could clearly point to a specific desired condition as the reason the project was proposed.

There will also be instances when negative effects related to achieving a specific desired condition are appropriate, either for long-term progress toward that same desired condition or for progress toward or maintenance of another desired condition. In this situation, the responsible official for the project needs to identify and disclose these effects in the project documentation and make a decision that balances these considerations.

It is also important that project consistency with a desired condition be assessed at the appropriate scale. For example, if a desired condition addresses watershed functionality at the scale of a 5th

level watershed, then the contribution of any proposal to that desired condition should be considered at that scale.

To be consistent with the desired conditions of the plan, a project or activity, when assessed at the appropriate spatial scale described in the plan, must be designed to meet one or more of the following conditions:

- Maintain or make progress toward one or more of the desired conditions of the plan without adversely affecting progress toward, or maintenance of, other desired conditions; or
- Be neutral with regard to progress toward plan desired conditions; or
- Maintain or make progress toward one or more of the desired conditions over the long term, even if the project or activity would adversely affect progress toward or maintenance of one or more desired conditions in the short term; or
- Maintain or make progress toward one or more of the desired conditions over the long term, even if the project or activity would adversely affect progress toward other desired conditions in a negligible way over the long term.

The project documentation should explain how the project is consistent with desired conditions and describe any short term, or negligible long term, adverse effects the project may have on the maintenance or attainment of any desired condition.

Plan Objectives

A project or activity is consistent with the objectives of the plan if it contributes to or does not prevent the attainment of any applicable objectives.

The project documentation should identify any applicable objectives to which the project contributes and document that the project does not prevent the attainment of any objectives. If there are no applicable objectives, the project can still be considered consistent with the objectives component of the plan. The project documentation should state that there are no applicable objectives.

Plan Standards

A project or activity is consistent with a standard if the project or activity is designed in exact accord with the standard.

The project documentation should confirm that the project is consistent with applicable standards.

Plan Guidelines

A project or activity must be consistent with all guidelines applicable to the type of project or activity and its location in the plan area. A project or activity can be consistent with a guideline in either of two ways:

- The project or activity is designed exactly in accord with the guideline; or

- A project or activity design varies from the exact words of the guideline, but it is as effective in meeting the purpose of the guideline to contribute to the maintenance or attainment of relevant desired conditions and objectives.

The project documentation should describe how the project is consistent with the guidelines. When the project varies from the exact words of the guideline, the documentation must specifically explain how the project design is as effective in contributing to the maintenance or attainment of relevant desired conditions and objectives.

Plan Suitability

A project with the purpose of timber production may only occur in an area identified as suitable for timber production (16 U.S.C. 1604(k)). The documentation for the project should confirm the project area meets the suitability for timber production criteria set out in Section 219.14 of the 1982 Planning Rule Provisions.

Except for projects with a purpose of timber production, a project or activity can be consistent with plan suitability determinations in either of two ways:

- The project or activity is a use identified in the plan as generally suitable for the location where the project or activity is to occur; or
- The project or activity is not a use identified in the plan as generally suitable for the location (i.e., the plan is silent on the use or the plan identifies the use as generally not suitable), but the responsible official determines that the use is appropriate for that location's desired conditions and objectives.

The project documentation should describe that the project or activity is either: (1) a use for which the area is specifically identified in the plan as generally suitable or (2) not a use for which the area is specifically identified in the plan as general suitable but is nonetheless appropriate for that location.

Special Areas

Where the plan provides plan components for a special area, a project or activity must be consistent with those area-specific components. The project documentation should describe how the project or activity is consistent with the area-specific components of the plan.

Monitoring

Monitoring is used to determine the degree to which on-the-ground management is maintaining or making progress toward desired conditions. The questions and performance measures in the monitoring strategy are designed to evaluate this progress at the forest level and not the project level. Therefore, the project documentation does not need to describe plan level (i.e., forest level) monitoring, but it may describe monitoring measures specific to the project.

Changes to the Plan

A change to the plan requires either an administrative correction or a plan amendment. The following paragraphs summarize circumstances that warrant corrections or amendments to the plan.

Administrative Corrections

Administrative corrections are minor changes to the plan that do not substantively affect the management direction or create additional environmental consequences. These minor changes include the following:

- Changes made in sections of the plan that are considered “other content” or do not represent plan decisions.
- Corrections and updates of data published in the plan and minor changes to maps.
- Changes in projections of timber management activities expected to occur during the planning period.
- Minor changes in text such as typographical errors and clarification of explanatory text.

An administrative correction must be initially published as a proposed correction either on the Prescott NF Web site or in a local newspaper of record. The proposed correction must identify the language or map to be corrected, the proposed correction, and the reason for the correction. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed correction within a 30-day period following publication. After reviewing the comments received, the final correction may be similarly published and the plan corrected.

Site-Specific Plan Amendments

Site-specific plan amendments allow specific projects or other activities to deviate from certain direction in the plan. These amendments occur only for a specific area or a specific project. They do not lead to changes in plan language, and if changes are made to management area map layers, they are made only for the area affected. Proposals for such amendments are usually accompanied by the appropriate NEPA analysis for the site-specific project in question. The procedures for processing a site-specific plan amendment are outlined in the applicable planning regulation (i.e., the planning rule).

Programmatic Plan Amendments

Programmatic plan amendments change the text and language of plan decisions (i.e., plan components) and any other changes that cannot be addressed through administrative corrections or site-specific plan amendments. The procedures for addressing a programmatic plan amendment are outlined in the applicable planning regulation.

Other Sources of Direction

The following sources contain direction which must be followed to implement the plan.

Motor Vehicle Use Map

The “Prescott National Forest Motor Vehicle Use Map” (MVUM) is the decision document which implements the Travel Management Rule. The MVUM displays the network of National Forest System roads, trails, and areas on National Forest System land that are designated for motor vehicle use.

Coconino National Forest Land Management Plan

The “Coconino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan” provides direction for Sycamore Canyon Wilderness which is located within and managed by three national forests—the Coconino, Kaibab, and Prescott.

Verde Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive River Management Plan for Coconino, Prescott, and Tonto National Forests

The “Verde Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive River Management Plan” provides direction for managing the segments of the Verde River on the Coconino, Prescott, and Tonto NFs which have Congressional Wild and Scenic River designation.

Appendix B of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Integrated Treatment of Noxious or Invasive Weeds

The “Final Environmental Impact Statement for Integrated Treatment of Noxious or Invasive Weeds” provides direction for an integrated program to treat noxious or invasive weeds in central Arizona on the Coconino, Kaibab, and Prescott NFs.