

Appendix C. Community Landscape Vision Statements

Introduction

Community landscape vision statements were developed as a part of early plan revision efforts to better understand local citizens' future vision for how areas of the Prescott NF near their communities should look and the ecological, economic, and social resources they should provide. During winter 2007 to spring 2008, the Prescott NF held a series of community vision workshops for the following communities neighboring the forest: Ash Fork, Black Canyon City, Castle Hot Springs, Cherry, Cottonwood/Verde Valley, Crown King, Jerome, Mayer, Paulden, Prescott/Prescott Valley/Chino Valley, and Wilhoit. Within these workshops, diverse groups of citizens shared their ideas, discussed differences, identified issues, learned from one another, and discovered many common interests. Dialogue between citizens and Forest Service plan revision employees was facilitated by a third party, and the resulting vision statements were drafted by community volunteers.

The Prescott NF used these vision statements to guide the development of plan components (e.g., desired conditions, standards, guidelines) for specific management areas in the revised plan such as the Agua Fria, Prescott Basin, and Verde Valley Management Areas. Summaries of these vision statements are captured in chapter 5 of the plan; however, they are included to provide context for the subsequent management area plan components and do not constitute actual plan direction. The vision statements in their entirety are displayed, by community, in *italic* text in the following paragraphs.

Community Landscape Vision Statements

Ash Fork

Ash Fork has successfully managed change to maintain its small town character while reviving the bustling community of the 1950s.

The community is still authentic Route 66, a western town where nature's experiences abound. The character has been kept through a strict adherence to a community based set of values and good communication.

We value:

- *Cleanliness*
- *History*
- *Respect*
- *Quality education and healthcare*
- *Safety*
- *Families*
- *A place where individuals can still make a difference!*

Black Canyon City¹

The ultimate desire of the citizens of Black Canyon City is the preservation of the rural nature of our community and the natural beauty of our surroundings. Coincidental to that desire is the retention of open space to be used for designated public recreational activities. The community would like a sufficient amount of BLM lands surrounding the town dedicated to future development of public trails, nature preserves, and riparian areas. A sufficient amount of land would be a minimum depth of 5 miles from the private property lines around the community. The State Trust Lands within that area would be purchased by BLM for inclusion in the designated open space.

The community would like the viewshed protected from the town to the mountaintops in all directions. Limiting further commercial or residential development will also help protect the limited water supply in our area. In support of these considerations, many residents have expressed an interest in working with BLM and other communities to assure continued protection, cleanliness, access, and enjoyment of the public lands in our area.

Castle Hot Springs¹

Our community has a vision to maintain our remote yet reachable lifestyle, yet we also recognize that recreational use will increase and needs to be accommodated. This is not only an enforcement issue for the BLM, Yavapai and Maricopa Counties, and the city of Peoria, but also an increasing social issue for our community. With this in mind, our community embraces the following as a means to maintain our way of life, as well as deal with increased outside pressure:

- *Existing, historically described roads on BLM land must be mapped, legally described, and dedicated so as to ensure that residents and property owners can continue to access and use their lands into perpetuity.*
- *We need to seriously consider a recreational-user fee, earmarked for the local community, imposed on nonresidents to help fund the substantially increasing costs associated with recreational uses.*
- *Existing roads (whether public, private, or easement) located in areas subject to occasional inundation will be exempt from permitting requirements for continued maintenance in this area.*
- *In considering changes in the use of private property in this area, the county or city will not be permitted to consider Federal goals and objectives for the surrounding property.*
- *All Federal lands in the Lake Pleasant area are to be treated the same as private property with regard to obtaining new or perfecting existing legal and physical access.*
- *Mineral rights retained by BLM in this area under private property will be transferred gratis to the surface owners.*
- *We want a community-based stewardship group to proactively plan and later provide expertise, labor, and cultural wisdom with BLM on all recreational uses, including but not limited to nonmotorized and motorized trails.*
- *Many of the existing water wells are in the “younger alluvium” as currently defined by recent case law.*

¹ Statements for Black Canyon City and Castle Hot Springs were taken from the vision statements in the Bureau of Land Management “Agua Fria and Bradshaw-Harquahala Draft Resource Management Plan” (2005).

- *Encourage the reestablishment of a northern loop road around Lake Pleasant linking to Table Mesa Road at I-17 for health/safety/welfare purposes.*
- *Target shooting needs to be encouraged in appropriate and safe areas. Our community is willing, as a stewardship group, to counsel BLM on appropriate areas for target shooting.*
- *Encourage appropriate discreet cell site development to provide for better law enforcement telecommunications.*

Cherry

Maintain community outreach programs to foster voluntary community involvement, input, and feedback to inform policy development and facilitate implementation.

Utilize communities as onsite resources to monitor both natural and human induced occurrences in the national forest setting.

Recognize that private interests maintain a tangible stake in best outcomes strategic planning.

Whenever desirable and feasible promote partnerships between local communities, municipal, state and Federal agencies to formulate and achieve goals.

Maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct as trustees of a national asset.

Identify controversial issues and attempt resolution through public educational campaigns.

It was noted that the national forest is the backyard and garden of all citizens and most individual operators would not damage their own personal property in the way they do in the national forest setting. A public educational campaign to increase environmental awareness.

Cottonwood/Verde Valley

The Verde Valley landscape, west of the Verde River, includes the city of Cottonwood and the towns of Jerome, Clarkdale and Camp Verde, each with their own identity and community character. Intermingled are unincorporated residential neighborhoods, farms, and ranches. All are buffered by Prescott National Forest lands, which provide natural open spaces and big mountain views. The Black Mountain Range, featuring Mingus Mountain and Woodchute Wilderness on the north and Squaw Peak and Cedar Bench Wilderness to the south, forms a scenic backdrop for the entire valley.

These wide open spaces and urban interface areas are highly regarded by communities for their natural and cultural resource values, and their social and economic benefits. They are free of litter and illegal uses; and they are protected from wildfire. In addition to providing a panoramic viewscape, the forest protects the region's watershed by storing groundwater and sustaining renewable and nonrenewable resources for future generations.

Forest and range vegetation are healthy, providing habitat diversity, forage for grazing animals, and natural corridors for wildlife. The Verde River flows year round through a lush riparian greenway, providing water for agricultural production, habitat for animals, and a large variety of recreational opportunities. All recreationists—including anglers, birders, hunters, hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, gun enthusiasts, river runners, hang gliders and off-highway vehicle drivers—respect and utilize the forest in harmony with each other and the environment.

A system of nonmotorized multiuse trails connects communities, allows access to public lands and encourages people to improve health and vitality by exploring the outdoors. Roads and

selected areas are managed for responsible use of off-highway vehicles, while other areas are set aside for protection or managed for nonmotorized uses.

Especially important are the geologic, prehistoric, and historic attributes of the Verde Valley. People—including the Sinagua, Yavapai-Apache, miners, pioneer settlers and today’s residents—have occupied the valley for over 900 years. Visitor centers and educational activities that raise public awareness of cultural values attract locals and tourists alike.

Federal, State and county agencies work cooperatively and effectively with neighboring municipalities, groups, and individuals to protect public lands and enforce the rules that govern them.

Crown King

To be known as a community that values the heritage and natural beauty of this region. That encourages and provides equal access to services, amenities, and recreational activities. That sustains and provides protection to the sociological, economical, and ecological health of public and private lands, through enforcement of the rules that govern them. To be a community that values cooperation and participates in effective communication with Federal, State and local agencies and that will contribute time and resources to enhance the safety and security of residents, property owners, and guests of the Crown King area.

- *Active forest management through agency/community collaborative efforts to help maintain forest health and reduce danger of catastrophic fires.*
- *Adequate public facilities to accommodate the many visitors that frequent Crown King and the surrounding area.*
- *Increase the number of improved campsites, including existing and previously closed campsites.*
- *Regular maintenance of all roads to provide safe public accessibility and evacuation if needed.*
- *Provide and maintain adequate and designated motorized and nonmotorized trails.*
- *Consistent and timely enforcement of existing laws and rules that govern use of public and private lands.*
- *Preservation of the unique history of Crown King and the Southern Bradshaws as an historic mining area.*
- *Cooperation between the community and the Forest Service will help to maintain the ecological, economical, and sociological health of Crown King and the surrounding area.*

Jerome

Looking ahead 50 years, we, the community of Jerome, envision a community landscape where our views are maintained views, air quality protected, and open space surrounding Jerome preserved.

We envision areas adjoining our town where we can go to escape the traffic noise of our busy community—motorized vehicles, recreational shooting, and other negative impacts on our town.

We envision retaining the natural environment as close to our town limits as possible, thus ensuring nearby places of refuge to enjoy the outdoors and reflect on the beauty of the Prescott National Forest (PNF).

We envision a preserved landscape free of commercialization and development, and feel strongly that existing PNF boundaries be kept intact.

We hold a strong sense that PNF should focus on proactive protection of natural and cultural resources, ensuring their existence for future generations.

We envision the PNF actively working to minimize activities that pose a threat to wildlife and low-impact recreation (i.e., hiking and horseback riding).

Specifically, we would like the PNF to strictly limit OHV and shooting activities, as well as provide programs that educate and inform these users to reduce reckless practice of these sports.

Finally, we envision that the PNF will have the capacity to enforce existing laws.

Mayer

As stewards of the upper Agua Fria Landscape, which provides beauty, bounty and sustenance, we envision a sustainable future of health and continued abundance through considerate, wise use of its resources.

Good water quality and adequate water supply in our watershed directly affects our success and survival. We encourage and support projects to minimize runoff of rainfall and prevent erosion, increasing water retention within our watershed. Along riparian zones, we support projects to preserve topsoil, control invasive plant species, and maintain plant and animal diversity. Projects which slow perennial streamflow and control runoff conserve land which would otherwise disappear. Low impact recreational use is to be encouraged in these areas.

Healthy forests and rangelands are keys to sustainability. We support least impact timber management practices and managed grazing to control excess combustible vegetation. We support ranching practices that utilize renewable forage resources in a sustainable fashion, and that develop and maintain range improvements. Ranching and farming allow for preservation of open space, limiting housing and industrial encroachment.

We support projects to ensure stable, noninvasive wildlife populations. Maintenance and development of permanent water resources, interagency cooperation on hunting and education, and enforcement of allowable motorized vehicle access provide us with the open space needed to respectfully experience wildlife, especially important in times of drought. We support efforts to control the invasion of feral hogs, and request continued research into the effects of the increasing population of elk and its expanding habitat in our watershed. We recognize fire as a management tool and respect its role in the evolution of the forest and a critical component of forest health. We desire continued research into the potential positive and negative effects of fire on the lands. Recreational opportunities abound on our forest. We support and desire the maintenance of trails and signage, control of trash accumulation and illegal dumping, and designation of motorized vehicles to roads and specific "OHV use areas."

The increasing demand on our natural resources compels us to keep abreast of conservation practices that prove to be more efficient, sustainable, nonpolluting, and respectful of diversity. As these improved practices become available, we support their timely implementation, with our vision remaining optimistic for the future.

Paulden²

Paulden residents have made a strong statement that the community they desire will be rural in character and lifestyle. But it is in the details of that statement that defines what “rural” and “character” mean. For Paulden, that means low density in all aspect of the community; housing, traffic, commercial uses, etc. They note that it is critical to maintain the historic 2-acre minimum lot zoning in all future development, planned or not. Commercial and residential development should always be of a small scale, even if that means residents must travel to other parts of the Prescott area for many commercial goods and services. There is no expressed feeling that Paulden needs a “downtown.” Although there is a concern for maintenance and reduction of trash and clutter, many citizens also appreciate the dirt roads that are characteristic through much of the area.

Paulden residents have already taken some steps to assure the character of their community. First, by deciding to remain unincorporated, the community will be working with Yavapai County officials, departments, and zoning and development codes to guide its growth. Then by requesting a community plan be prepared, they will receive official recognition by county, State and Federal agencies of the specifics of how Paulden is to grow.

But beyond density, the sense of openness is critical to the sense of remaining rural. Paulden is fortunate to be surrounded by State and Federal lands. They not only help set the character of the community, but offer close by recreational opportunities. Maintaining these lands and access to them, thus, is very important to this community. Also, open areas and the feeling of “space” distinguish Paulden from other, more built-up communities. Access throughout the area for horseback riding, hiking, taking the dogs out for walks and rides allow residents to take advantage of the openness the community enjoys.

Rural communities come from an agricultural and ranching heritage and Paulden’s heritage stretches for more than a century. Paulden feels it is fortunate to have working ranches adjacent to it and has maintained the rural traditions of providing homes for horses and many animals as part of the daily life of residents. Preserving both the ranches and appreciation for animals is a goal almost universally stated by residents.

Finally, Paulden enjoys the benefits of pure environment, bountiful fresh water, clear skies, and starry nights. These all contribute to the sense of a rural community and maintaining them is a priority to be met in the plan. Foremost among these is a protection of the community’s water supply. Minimizing night lights, protecting the water supply, and avoiding any sources of air pollution are critical to maintaining this environment.

Challenges: In its visioning process, the community recognized there are challenges to be met if it is to achieve its goals in a general plan. Within the community there are areas that will need special attention, notably old platted areas with substandard sized lots, old manufactured homes that need maintenance, potential groundwater pollution and trash and litter. The community recognizes that it will need to partner with County and State agencies to be successful in improving these locations. Whether it is area-wide trash cleanup needs or reducing dust on the roads by ATC drivers, the plan must address methods to maintain and improve the environment of Paulden.

Of equal concern is the ability to preserve the underground aquifer that supplies water to residents. Residents are aware of the desirability of using this resource and that there are

² Statements for Paulden were taken from the draft “Paulden Community Plan” (2007).

challenges to ensuring the water supply remains available to residents living in the Big Chino basin. All efforts must be made to partner with groups working to accomplish this.

Finally, the Paulden plan needs to clearly state the unique vision for itself as a rural community and the elements that will maintain that vision. In order to maintain the character that many have found desirable here, residents accept several tradeoffs. The plan must express this balance so that as new residents consider Paulden as a home, they are aware of this character that has been chosen by Paulden residents and can accept it and help to reinforce and maintain it.

Prescott/Prescott Valley/Chino Valley

Overall Forest Health and Fire: The Prescott/Prescott Valley/Chino Valley community values the Prescott National Forest (PNF) for the many recreational, economic and ecological services that it provides. The natural beauty and rural character of the surrounding public lands are a vital part of this community. Our vision of those lands 50 years from now is that they remain in the public domain, a resource shared across generations. We envision a forest where...

- *Diverse, primarily native vegetation will protect soil from erosion, both in upland and riparian areas. Healthy wildlife populations will play an integral role in these ecosystems.*
- *The risk of forest fires will be reduced in the wildland-urban interface where the forest and community partners will actively work to reduce hazardous fuel loads. Ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable uses of forest products will support these projects.*
- *Active forest management, with an emphasis on restoration of natural ecological processes, developed through agency-community collaborative efforts, will help maintain forest health and reduce the risk of stand-replacing wildfires forestwide.*
- *All of this, in turn, will promote healthy watersheds where storage of water in the soil, stream courses and local aquifers is maximized.*
- *The healthy forest will contribute to global sustainability and will be a natural, trash-free place with quiet settings.*
- *The PNF will have sufficient financial resources to meet its management obligations, including adequate law enforcement.*

Recreation: Through ongoing dialogue among land managers and communities, a thoughtful balance will be achieved between the need for access and the protection of forest resources and aesthetics. In our vision, a comprehensive recreational travel plan regionwide will protect forest health and promote robust economies in our cities and towns. The Prescott National Forest (PNF) will maintain a comprehensive system of meaningful and sustainable trails, trailheads, and designated campsites. Low maintenance facilities built collaboratively among citizens and agencies will be valued by all. The PNF, with user participation, will minimize user conflict through enhanced separation between nonmotorized and multiuse trails. The trails will be enjoyed by hikers, equestrians, bicyclists, motorized vehicle operators, and hunters, with a reasonable amount of access to all user groups. Cross-country motor vehicle travel will continue to be prohibited.*

Economic: All economic activities on the forest will be managed to minimize forest damage while promoting healthy ecosystems and public safety. Grazing allotments will be adaptively managed to promote healthy and productive grasslands and watersheds, while supporting ranch families who are good stewards of the land and represent an important part of our local history and

culture. The PNF will continue to support a range of activities that directly contribute to local economies.

Community Involvement/Partnerships: Citizens will recognize an ethical obligation to protect the forest for the future; this land ethic will be shared with all newcomers to the area. Vibrant partnerships with emerging or established community groups will enhance the Forest Service's ability to provide services, enabling a large group of citizen volunteers to respond to the needs of the forest, including trail maintenance, user education, and fire prevention. This informed, engaged citizenry—through a multiinterest nonprofit and/or stewardship group—will actively participate in an ongoing collaborative process of forest planning that ensures the PNF will be enjoyed by more generations to come.

**Unauthorized motor vehicle travel off of designated roads, trails and areas.*

Wilhoit

Wilhoit is rural in character with a strong desire to remain that way. We are surrounded by Prescott National Forest and State Trust Lands. Our quiet, private community has few public attractions and amenities. "Low impact" commercial growth might be welcomed on SR 89 (fuel pumps?).

The public areas surrounding our community should allow recreational access for all ages and physical conditions where practical. Example: Thunderbird Meadows access to FR 72.

Reasonable fees should be charged for access; the income earmarked for:

- *Forest Road maintenance*
- *Rules signage. Examples: "OHV allowed trails," "No litter," etc.*
- *Trails and water source access for horses*
- *Volunteer program for trail management*

Fire prevention is paramount and should be ongoing.

- *Continue prescribed burns and brush thinning around our community for fuel reduction. The north side of our community must be attended to next. Brush removed must be chipped or removed immediately after clearing.*
- *Manage the public areas to reduce fuel buildup. A clean forest makes for a safer community. Encourage the public to remove deadfalls for firewood after fires.*
- *Widen Highway 89 shoulder clearing.*
- *Widen the Forest Road system and trails for firebreaks.*
- *Enforce building codes to restrict structure density.*
- *Tougher law enforcement/greater punishments for those who start fires.*
- *Reforestation efforts should be stepped up.*
- *Plant seedlings to introduce more favorable varieties.*
- *Should be done soon after prescribed or involuntary burns.*
- *Better use of greater financial resources.*
- *How can we increase budget allotments for our desired community vision?*
- *More call boxes.*
- *Water reservoirs for fire fighting.*

- *Funding for our fire department.*
- *Interagency coordination.*
- *Federal – State – County (FSC) communication network to feed down to local level.*
- *FSC policy coordination.*
- *FSC plan parity.*