

- 1 ■ Reclamation plans for disturbed sites will be site-specific and appropriate for the soils,  
2 vegetation, and climate.

### 3 Management Approaches

- 4 ■ Energy transmission lines should not be visible (usually underground) across the landscape.
- 5 ■ The Cibola National Forest should coordinate with relevant local, State, and Federal agencies  
6 during all phases of proposed energy projects.
- 7 ■ Where possible, renewable energy projects should be planned to provide economic benefits for  
8 the citizens of surrounding counties.

## 9 Recreation

### 10 General Recreation

#### 11 Background and Description

12 The Cibola National Forest provides a diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities, connecting  
13 people with nature in a variety of diverse settings and activities. Participation in recreational  
14 activities is what draws most people to the Forest, making it an important portal for understanding  
15 the meaning, history, and relevance of public lands as a whole. Recreation contributes greatly to the  
16 physical, mental, and spiritual health of individuals, bonds family and friends, instills pride in  
17 heritage, and provides economic benefits to communities, regions, and the Nation.

18 The natural, cultural, and scenic environments of the Forest offer settings for a wide range of high-  
19 quality recreation and tourism opportunities. Quiet mountain, forested, and high-desert places  
20 provide an escape and climatic relief from urban environments. Cultural features provide historical  
21 context to the natural scenery, and add to the richness of the experience and sense of place.

22 Recreation opportunities on the Cibola National Forest include non-motorized, motorized,  
23 developed, and dispersed recreation on land, water, and in the air. The social, managerial, and  
24 physical attributes of a place, when combined, provide a distinct set of recreation opportunities. The  
25 Cibola National Forest uses the recreation opportunity spectrum to define the types of outdoor  
26 recreation opportunities, settings, and experiences the public might desire, and identifies that portion  
27 of the spectrum the Forest might be able to provide. The opportunities, settings, and activities for  
28 obtaining experiences are arranged across a continuum or spectrum of six classes: primitive, semi-  
29 primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized, roaded natural, rural, and urban. The current set  
30 of recreation opportunity spectrum classes are presented in Appendix F of this document.

31 Forest landscapes, resources, and programs offer opportunities for education and engagement of  
32 children and adults alike. This facilitates an understanding of and participation in resource  
33 conservation and promotes knowledge and appreciation of the natural world and its relationship to  
34 human communities.

#### 35 Desired Conditions

- 36 ■ The Cibola National Forest welcomes a diverse group of visitors by providing a variety of  
37 developed and dispersed recreation and tourism opportunities (for example, camping, picnicking,  
38 hiking, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, driving for pleasure, and motorized  
39 recreation) that are appropriate for the recreation setting and other resource values.

- 1 ■ The Cibola National Forest provides a sustainable recreation program consistent with public  
2 demand, management needs, and other natural and cultural resource values.
- 3 ■ The Cibola National Forest provides a range of high quality recreation settings, uses, activities,  
4 and year-round opportunities.
- 5 ■ User conflicts are minimized.
- 6 ■ There is no vandalism, theft, illegal activity, or resource damage on the Forest from recreation  
7 activities.
- 8 ■ The recreation program is integrated into all forest resource management decisions and activities  
9 and is adaptable to changes in recreation use and trends.
- 10 ■ The unique cultural, historical, and ecological resources of the Forest are featured through  
11 recreation opportunities, education, and interpretation. Visitors are connected to the importance  
12 of the past.
- 13 ■ The Cibola National Forest recreation program enhances the economic, cultural, and social  
14 vitality and well-being of surrounding communities. Local communities are involved in  
15 partnerships to facilitate and participate in the management of the Forest.
- 16 ■ Conservation education, visitor information, and interpretation inform and engage visitors and  
17 local communities. These resources are readily available and encourage increased forest  
18 stewardship, ecological awareness, visitor orientation, and knowledge of recreation  
19 opportunities.
- 20 ■ Forest Service presence, services, and high quality recreation sites are provided as appropriate to  
21 the setting, and contribute to a sense of safety, enjoyment, and satisfaction for Forest users.
- 22 ■ Special cultural and natural areas, including caves and heritage sites, are protected and managed  
23 using Forest Service best management practices.

## 24 Guidelines

- 25 ■ All project-level decisions and implementation activities should be consistent with mapped  
26 classes and setting descriptions in the recreation opportunity spectrum to sustain recreation  
27 settings and opportunities on the Cibola National Forest.
- 28 ■ When possible, management activities that affect visitors should be scheduled outside of the  
29 major recreation season to prevent negative socio-economic impacts to the recreation program.
- 30 ■ Rock climbing should be managed to balance demand for the activity and the need to protect  
31 plants, animals (including species of conservation concern), and other natural and cultural  
32 resources.
- 33 ■ Management of cave access for recreational purposes should be balanced with wildlife  
34 protection and/or cultural resources. Interpretive and informational signs should be posted near  
35 caves with known recreation access with information on prevention of the spread of White-nose  
36 Syndrome and other pathogens.

- 1 ■ Identified bat roosts (including but not limited to caves) should be protected from recreational  
2 disturbance during periods of bat occupancy including but not limited to maternal roosts or  
3 hibernacula<sup>13</sup>.
- 4 ■ Healthy, large trees should comprise the majority of trees in developed and dispersed recreation  
5 sites to provide shade and screening around hardened sites in order to preserve the recreation  
6 setting; some younger and mid-aged trees are retained to serve as replacement trees and as  
7 additional screening.
- 8 ■ Known populations or active nesting sites of species of conservation concern (including but not  
9 limited to active peregrine falcon nests or populations of Sandia Mountain alumroot) on cliff  
10 faces should be managed for protection from disturbance from recreation activities during the  
11 breeding or growing season.

## 12 Management Approaches

- 13 ■ Implement a sustainable recreation approach consistent with the Cibola National Forest and  
14 Grasslands Sustainable Recreation Strategy, including the completion of the actions and  
15 objectives outlined in strategy.
- 16 ■ Develop relationships with local communities, partnerships, volunteers, other government  
17 agencies, cooperators, and permit holders to help co-manage a sustainable recreation program,  
18 including planning, design, implementation, and operations and maintenance. Recognize  
19 partners for their roles in providing recreational opportunities when possible.
- 20 ■ Complete recreation management plans as needed. This includes design concept plans, scenic  
21 byway corridor management plans, interpretive plans, wilderness plans, design narratives, and  
22 others. Use recommendations from various recreation plans in project implementation.
- 23 ■ Develop a Cibola National Forest interpretive plan to address educational, interpretive, and  
24 informational needs of each District, and identify key messages for the Forest.
- 25 ■ The Forest places an emphasis on providing interpretive programs within administrative  
26 capabilities, especially through its visitor centers, ranger stations, popular recreation sites, and  
27 development of education tools. A variety of techniques (for example, handouts, websites,  
28 presentations, social media platforms) are considered to educate users on topics ranging from  
29 land ethics to Forest history.
- 30 ■ Promote established programs (such as TreadLightly!®, Leave No Trace, Kids in the Woods,  
31 Passport in Time, Bear Aware) and develop new conservation education programs that help  
32 connect people to nature and encourage responsible use at schools, youth activities, fairs,  
33 volunteer events, etc.
- 34 ■ The Cibola National Forest may provide for multilingual interpretation and look for  
35 opportunities to partner with local schools. In recreation areas popular with Spanish-speaking  
36 visitors, information may be provided in both English and Spanish.

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<sup>13</sup> A shelter occupied in the winter by a dormant animal.

- 1 ■ Follow the most current versions of the Forest Service Sign and Poster Guidelines and Built  
2 Environment Image Guide and develop sign plans as needed for scenic byways and other  
3 popular areas to provide improved visitor information and a consistent Forest Service image.
- 4 ■ Applicable accessibility guidelines are incorporated in the design and installation of new signs  
5 and printed materials.
- 6 ■ Use the Cibola Recreation Site Analysis, Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility  
7 Guidelines (USDA Forest Service 2013a), and Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines  
8 (USDA Forest Service 2013b) to improve accessibility for visitors.
- 9 ■ Consider unique collaborative approaches with range specialists to address conflicting uses  
10 between livestock permittees and recreationists, such as use of corrals, drinkers, and related  
11 range improvements, and in areas where fence lines and recreational trails intersect to minimize  
12 cutting of fences.
- 13 ■ The Forest may adopt design standards and best management practices for emerging recreation  
14 activities as they become available. Adopting management policies for new forms of recreation  
15 may be considered as time allows and in accordance with the desired interest these new forms  
16 attract in relation to other known recreation uses and resource concerns.

## 17 **Developed Recreation**

### 18 **Background and Description**

19 Developed recreation on the Cibola National Forest includes management of campgrounds, picnic  
20 areas trailheads, ski areas, and other day-use sites. The Cibola's four mountain districts have  
21 approximately 137 developed sites. Most are easily accessible by passenger car. With the exception  
22 of some trailheads, the developed recreation areas are open primarily in the summer and fall. Some  
23 developed recreation sites remain open year-round.

### 24 **Desired Conditions**

- 25 ■ There is a spectrum of developed recreation opportunities characterized by varying levels of  
26 development and amenities appropriate to the setting. The quality, locations, and variety of  
27 recreation sites and their associated amenities add to visitor satisfaction and resource protection.
- 28 ■ Recreation sites are designed and maintained to complement the Forests' scenery resources and  
29 scenic character.<sup>14</sup> Facilities range from primitive to highly developed, with an emphasis on  
30 blending the facilities with the natural landscape.
- 31 ■ Healthy forest vegetation (species, size, and age) in developed sites complements recreational  
32 activities, scenery, and safety.
- 33 ■ Resource and facility deterioration and damage is mitigated, and changes in recreational use are  
34 managed as appropriate within the setting.

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<sup>14</sup> Scenic character is defined as the combination of physical, biological, and cultural images that gives an area its scenic identity and contributes to its sense of place.

1 **Standards**

- 2 ■ The maximum allowable occupancy of National Forest System lands within the Cibola National  
3 Forest shall be 14 days (consecutive or not) within a 90-day period, except as allowed by permit.  
4 ■ Developed trailheads and day-use sites shall not be designated for overnight use.  
5 ■ Developed sites shall be designed to provide for low-maintenance and accessible facilities while  
6 meeting other resource needs.

7 **Guidelines**

- 8 ■ Design, construction, and maintenance of facilities should harmonize with the surrounding  
9 landscape and be consistent with the development scale appropriate to the recreation opportunity  
10 spectrum class and most recent version of The Built Environment Image Guide for the National  
11 Forests and Grasslands.  
12 ■ Recreation sites should be planned, designed, and managed to prevent resource damage, and for  
13 activities and capacities that do not cause unacceptable resource damage or adversely impact the  
14 scenic character.  
15 ■ Sustainable design should be incorporated in the alteration of existing facilities and in new  
16 construction of recreation sites and facilities.  
17 ■ Recreation facilities and improvements should be designed to prevent human and wildlife  
18 conflicts, for example, egress for wildlife in vault toilet vents, animal resistant trash cans, and  
19 capped pipes on gates and interpretive sign bases.  
20 ■ Constructed features should be maintained to support the function(s) for which they were built.  
21 When no longer utilized as intended, they should be repurposed to accommodate the new use or  
22 decommissioned in order to minimize maintenance backlog and infrastructure deterioration, and  
23 to protect public safety and health.  
24 ■ Public safety and stewardship information should be posted at developed recreation sites  
25 (including a welcome to the site, as well as rules and regulations on recreational activities).  
26 ■ Pack-it-in, pack-it-out practices should be promoted at dispersed sites.  
27 ■ To promote a natural appearing landscape, invasive species should be removed or treated on  
28 existing sites before they become widespread within recreational sites.  
29 ■ Gathering of dead and down firewood for recreation use while camping or picnicking should be  
30 authorized where appropriate, but should not be authorized in riparian areas.  
31 ■ Also see the “Vegetation,” “Scenery,” and “Infrastructure” sections of the Plan for guidelines  
32 related to developed recreation.

33 **Management Approaches**

- 34 ■ Within 5 years, assess the sustainability and relevance of the developed recreation program.  
35 Once the assessment is complete, prioritize for decommissioning, closing, or repurposing  
36 facilities identified as unsustainable.  
37 ■ Provide design narratives for projects to determine the appropriate location, capacity, and type of  
38 facilities required to meet user needs in the context of the forest setting.  
39 ■ District design guidelines may be developed to manage specific design issues, identify  
40 appropriate architectural themes and styles, and provide consistent design that represents each  
41 mountain landscape’s unique scenic character.

- 1 ■ Adaptively manage recreation facilities and opportunities as needed to shift limited program  
2 resources to prioritized sites and opportunities.
- 3 ■ Changes in use trends may be considered when reconstruction occurs or when designing new  
4 sites. For example, if recreational vehicle use or type increases, larger parking spurs might be  
5 considered. Recreation sites considered for reconstruction may be prioritized based on site  
6 conditions and use levels and may be updated or reconstructed as funding levels allow.
- 7 ■ Recreation site overflow could be considered during periods of high use in areas where the short-  
8 term nature of the use is not likely to result in long-term resource damage and the use is not in  
9 conflict with active closure orders.
- 10 ■ The operation or closure of a site is informed by the season's volume of use, resource protection,  
11 opportunities for public/private partnerships, and operating costs.
- 12 ■ Review and complete accessibility assessments for compliance with Forest Service Outdoor  
13 Recreation Accessibility Guidelines and the Architectural Barriers Act on all developed  
14 recreation sites; prioritize sites for upgrades as funding and opportunity allow.
- 15 ■ Patrol areas regularly for public contact, education, and safety, facility/resource protection, and  
16 fee compliance.
- 17 ■ Sites are operated to the current standards, such as those outlined in the Forest Service  
18 publication *Cleaning Recreation Sites* (USDA Forest Service 1995b) or more recent technical  
19 report.
- 20 ■ Fee areas and concessionaires may be used to maintain and manage developed facilities,  
21 particularly in high-use areas. When this occurs, ensure applicable Forest Service rules are  
22 followed consistently.
- 23 ■ Sustainable operations are used where possible at developed recreation sites (for example,  
24 recycling receptacles, electric maintenance vehicles, etc.).
- 25 ■ Consider installing or replacing trash and food boxes with wildlife-resistant models at developed  
26 recreation sites.
- 27 ■ The Forest may coordinate in development of recreation facilities with other government  
28 agencies and non-governmental agencies to become a regional destination to support local and  
29 economic development.
- 30 ■ Consider repurposing historic employee residential facilities as recreation rentals. When this  
31 occurs, the historic character of facilities is maintained through use, and visitors can enjoy a  
32 historic recreation experience not previously available on the Forest.

## 33 **Dispersed Recreation**

### 34 **Background and Description**

35 Dispersed recreation is outdoor recreation occurring over broad expanses of the Cibola National  
36 Forest and includes management of a variety of motorized and non-motorized recreation  
37 opportunities. Examples of popular dispersed recreation include motorized and non-motorized trail  
38 use, dispersed camping, wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing, plant gathering, and photography.

### 39 **Desired Conditions**

- 40 ■ Dispersed recreation occurs in mostly undeveloped, natural areas, and is managed appropriate to  
41 the setting and to emphasize resource protection.

- 1 ■ Dispersed recreation occurs on designated National Forest System Trails and is consistent with  
2 respective trail management objectives to prevent resource damage and user conflicts.
- 3 ■ Facilities for dispersed recreation activities are minimal, consist of simple construction designs  
4 and materials that blend in with the surrounding area, and are provided primarily for resource  
5 protection.
- 6 ■ A system of trails provides a variety of opportunities and settings for visitors to explore the  
7 Forest. The system is sustainable and the design, construction, and maintenance of trails enhance  
8 the recreation opportunity, and minimize user conflict and damage to Forest natural and cultural  
9 resources.
- 10 ■ The trail system accommodates use levels compatible with other resource values and is  
11 consistent with public demand.
- 12 ■ Trail and trailhead level of development is appropriate to the site conditions, use, and setting.
- 13 ■ Trails vary in length and challenge and provide linkages to local neighborhoods, communities,  
14 and other public lands.

## 15 Standards

- 16 ■ No new motorized routes or areas shall be constructed or designated in desired primitive  
17 recreation opportunity spectrum settings. In semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity  
18 spectrum settings, no new permanent motorized routes or areas shall be constructed or  
19 designated; any temporary project-level motorized routes or road construction in semi-primitive  
20 non-motorized settings must be rehabilitated within 2 years of project completion.
- 21 ■ Impacts to recreation resource values resulting from the construction of temporary roads needed  
22 for project-level work shall be mitigated upon completion of the project.
- 23 ■ Motorized vehicle travel shall be managed to occur only on the designated system of roads,  
24 trails, and areas, as defined on motor vehicle use maps, except for those uses authorized by law,  
25 written authorizations and Forest orders.

## 26 Guidelines

- 27 ■ Trails should be designed, constructed, rerouted, or maintained utilizing current best practices to  
28 promote sustainable design while providing desired recreation opportunities and other resource  
29 needs.
- 30 ■ Trail markings, kiosks, and interpretive signage should communicate adequate information, be  
31 consistent with agency and Forest sign guidelines, and be designed to complement the scenic and  
32 cultural character of the surrounding landscape.
- 33 ■ When trails intersect with fences, accessible pass-through areas should be provided to allow for  
34 easier passage for recreation users, unless it interferes with range management and resource  
35 protection needed for the pasture.
- 36 ■ National Forest System trails should not be used for vegetation project activities, such as for  
37 landings and as skid trails. Impacts to system trails should be avoided where feasible, and  
38 mitigated upon project completion if unavoidable.
- 39 ■ Trails that are found to adversely impact natural and cultural resources should be evaluated for  
40 closure and alternative travel routes or locations should be developed where feasible.

- 1 ■ Trail maintenance and designated use in federally threatened or endangered species habitat  
2 should be consistent with guidance in that species' most recent approved recovery plan.
- 3 ■ Newly designated trails should avoid traveling through meadows, wetlands, seeps, springs,  
4 riparian areas, floodplains, sacred sites, and areas with high concentrations of significant  
5 archaeological sites, unless to provide for resource protection. The number of designated stream  
6 crossings should be limited to avoid impacts to these features.
- 7 ■ Where designated trail access to springs occurs, trails should be designed to prevent erosion,  
8 trampling, compaction, and inadvertent introduction of invasive and undesirable plants, animals,  
9 and disease while still allowing access by wildlife.
- 10 ■ New motorized trails should be located to avoid Mexican spotted owl protected activity centers,  
11 northern goshawk post-fledging family areas, and other wildlife areas as identified; seasonal  
12 restrictions may be an option.
- 13 ■ Motorized routes removed from the transportation system should be rehabilitated in order to  
14 avoid continued unauthorized use and future risk to hydrologic function, soil health, habitat, and  
15 scenic resources.
- 16 ■ After management activities occur in areas with high potential for cross-country motorized  
17 vehicle use, methods (such as barriers and signing) should be used to control unauthorized  
18 motorized use, consistent with the scenic integrity objectives.
- 19 ■ Non-motorized cross-country travel, by uses other than hiker and pedestrian use, should be  
20 discouraged and use should be directed to National Forest System trails. Use of National Forest  
21 System trails should be consistent with the respective trail management objectives to prevent  
22 resource damage and user conflicts.
- 23 ■ Dispersed camping should avoid cultural sites, trailheads (except those trailheads with  
24 designated dispersed sites already in use), sensitive wildlife areas, interpretive sites, or water  
25 resources.
- 26 ■ In dispersed areas, the priority for facilities or minor developments should be resource  
27 protection.
- 28 ■ Dispersed sites should be closed, rehabilitated, or otherwise mitigated when:
- 29 • Campsite conditions have deteriorated;
- 30 • Site occupancy exceeds the area's scenic integrity objective;
- 31 • There are social use conflicts; and/or
- 32 • Unacceptable environmental damage is occurring.
- 33 ■ When closing or rehabilitating dispersed recreation sites due to resource conditions, native  
34 vegetation and natural barriers should be used. In addition, information should be posted to  
35 redirect use and encourage public compliance in rehabilitation efforts.
- 36 ■ Where forage is limited, interpretation should be provided encouraging overnight campers with  
37 recreational livestock to carry cubed, pelleted, or rolled feed (free of viable noxious weeds) to  
38 prevent overgrazing of dispersed camping areas.

## 1 Management Approaches

- 2 ■ Develop a Forestwide protocol for assessing the sustainability, objective, and use of National  
3 Forest System trails and dispersed campsites and prioritizing work needed to address resource  
4 issues, conflicts in use, etc.
- 5 ■ Trail management objectives are prepared for new trails added to the National Forest System  
6 trails and are updated as needed for existing National Forest System trails.
- 7 ■ Trail management priorities are based on preventing erosion, providing appropriate and  
8 meaningful recreation opportunities, and accommodating administrative needs.
- 9 ■ Consider destination and loop opportunities when new trails or modifications to the trail system  
10 are planned.
- 11 ■ Consider analyzing and adding unauthorized trails when making revisions to the trail system.
- 12 ■ Management strategies, such as limiting use in certain areas and emphasizing use in others or  
13 closing areas altogether, may be implemented when there is a need to respond to resource  
14 concerns and reduce user conflicts. Use of sites traditionally used for dispersed camping or  
15 related activities may minimize the need for disturbing additional areas.
- 16 ■ Signing, enforcement, public information, seasonal and special closures, maintenance,  
17 construction, and restoration take place as appropriate. Emphasis is placed on addressing user  
18 conflicts and resource damage. Educational techniques (such as brochures, signs, websites, and  
19 social media) enhance visitor knowledge of proper non-motorized and motorized trail use  
20 etiquette.
- 21 ■ Cooperate with local governments, partners, and communities to provide for snow removal to  
22 allow for travel to and from winter outdoor activities.

## 23 Scenic Resources

### 24 Background and Description

25 The Cibola National Forest provides high quality scenery for present and future generations, and the  
26 public values the scenic character of the Forest. Scenic character is the set of physical, biological,  
27 and cultural features that give an area its scenic identity or sense of place. The Cibola National Forest  
28 mountain districts contain diverse “sky island” landscapes, ranging from semi-desert grasslands to  
29 mixed-coniferous forests and alpine meadows. The scenic character encompasses both social and  
30 ecological elements, including landform, vegetative pattern, water features, recreation opportunities,  
31 and cultural features. Buildings, structures, and other human alterations are considered a valuable  
32 aspect of scenic integrity when these features add to the sense of place or reflect the cultural legacy  
33 of an area.

34 The Cibola National Forest uses the Forest Service Scenery Management System to determine the  
35 value and importance of scenery and identify scenic resources as they relate to people. Scenic  
36 integrity indicates the degree of intactness and wholeness of the scenic character. Scenic integrity  
37 objectives are defined by degrees or levels of alteration from the desired scenic character and the  
38 intent is to achieve the highest scenic integrity possible.

39 The Forest is divided into levels of desired scenic integrity: “very high,” “high,” “moderate,” “low”  
40 and “very low.” These levels set objectives for the amount of variation from the existing scenic  
41 character that is permissible within the scenic integrity level. The current set of scenic integrity  
42 objectives are presented in Appendix G of this document.