

## 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.

## 1 Desired Conditions

- 2 ■ Scenery management, scenic character, and scenery values are integrated into the design,  
3 planning, and implementation of all resource management decisions.
- 4 ■ The Cibola National Forest scenic character is characterized by a predominately natural  
5 appearing landscape and valued cultural landscape, which reflect the Forest’s sense of place. The  
6 scenic quality of landscapes is restored, maintained or enhanced across the Forest.
- 7 ■ High quality scenery and scenic values are protected in areas of high public use, such as scenic  
8 byways, major roads and trails, and developed recreation sites.
- 9 ■ Scenic resources and scenic character reflect ecosystem diversity, enhance the recreation  
10 settings, and contribute to the quality of life of local residents and communities.

## 11 Guidelines

- 12 ■ Constructed features, facilities, and management activities closely follow the form, line, color,  
13 texture, and pattern common to the desired scenic character being viewed to remain visually  
14 subordinate to the surrounding landscape, except where the size or design of a structure is such  
15 that it would dominate the landscape. For those exceptions, the structures complement the  
16 desired scenic character.
- 17 ■ Management activities should be consistent with scenic integrity objectives for the area.
- 18 ■ Management activities may result in short-term impacts (3 to 5 years) that are inconsistent with  
19 the scenic integrity objective if those impacts are necessary in achieving the scenic integrity  
20 objective over the long term. Projects should include mitigation measures to address impacts to  
21 scenic resources.
- 22 ■ In areas with “very high” scenic integrity objectives, no alterations from desired scenic character  
23 should be allowed.
- 24 ■ In areas with “high” scenic integrity objectives, only minimal alterations from desired scenic  
25 character should be allowed.
- 26 ■ In areas with “moderate” scenic integrity objectives, only slight alterations from desired scenic  
27 character should be allowed, which ensure that deviations remain visually subordinate to the  
28 desired scenic character.
- 29 ■ In areas with “low” scenic integrity objectives, only moderate alterations from the desired scenic  
30 character should be allowed.
- 31 ■ Activities that affect scenic quality should be scheduled outside of the major recreation season,  
32 unless doing so would not achieve project goals or would conflict with wildlife restrictions.
- 33 ■ New utility lines should be buried in areas with sensitive scenic resources, such as areas along  
34 scenic byways, nationally designated trails, and within recreation areas, unless needed to meet  
35 statutory requirements, such as United States mining law or laws to protect public health and  
36 safety. Existing utility lines that do not meet scenic integrity objectives should be buried or  
37 relocated to reduce scenic impacts whenever opportunities become available (such as when poles  
38 are replaced).
- 39 ■ Mining activities should incorporate reclamation measures that reduce visual contrasts with the  
40 surrounding landscapes. Mitigation measures, including recontouring topography and  
41 revegetation of bare sites where necessary, should be utilized to move areas impacted by mining  
42 activities to the long-term scenic integrity objectives of that area.

- 1 ■ Potential solar and/or wind energy development should not be located in areas with “high”  
2 scenic integrity objectives or in the foreground along concern level 1 trails, recreations sites, and  
3 roads (concern level 1 are the routes identified with the most public concern for scenery).
- 4 ■ For vegetation management and forest health improvement projects:
  - 5 • Scenic integrity objectives may be temporarily lowered in the short term if necessary to meet  
6 project objectives, but should meet scenic integrity objectives over the long term.
  - 7 • Vegetation management projects should avoid even spacing of retained trees, leave a  
8 diversity of tree species and sizes, avoid damage to remaining vegetation, and naturalize  
9 disturbed areas.
  - 10 • Prescribed slash treatment in the immediate foreground (up to 300 feet) of concern level 1  
11 and 2 travelways (area with the most public concern for scenery) should be completed as  
12 soon as conditions permit.
  - 13 • Healthy, large trees should comprise the majority of the immediate foreground along concern  
14 level 1 and 2 travelways, unless doing so would not achieve project goals; some younger and  
15 mid-aged trees are retained to serve as replacement trees and as additional screening.
  - 16 • In the immediate foreground along concern level 1 and 2 travelways, stumps should be  
17 treated to reduce their visibility by methods such as cutting as low as possible (no more than  
18 6 inches above ground on uphill side) and angling large stump faces away from viewing  
19 locations unless doing so would pose a safety hazard.
- 20 ■ Log decks should be removed, and actions should be taken to naturalize skid trails as soon as  
21 conditions permit.
- 22 ■ Effects from prescribed fire should be considered during project planning and implementation.  
23 Blackened and scorched vegetation may be visible in project areas in the short term following  
24 treatments, but scenic integrity objectives should be met in the long term. Efforts should be made  
25 to minimize high intensity fire in areas with high scenic integrity such as along system trails and  
26 scenic vistas.
- 27 ■ Range facilities are allowed in all scenic integrity objectives, but should use mitigation measures  
28 to minimize impacts to scenic quality.
- 29 ■ New facilities added to communication sites, astrophysical complexes, and administrative sites  
30 should be clustered within existing areas. Facility colors and materials should blend with the  
31 landscape, structures should generally be below the height of vegetation, and vegetation that  
32 screens views to facilities should be protected and encouraged unless doing so would not achieve  
33 project goals.
- 34 ■ Also see the “Vegetation,” “Special Uses,” “Minerals,” “Fuels,” “Range,” “Infrastructure,”  
35 “Recreation,” and “Designated Areas” sections of the Plan for guidelines related to scenery.

## 36 Management Approaches

- 37 ■ The Scenery Management System is a tool for inventorying and managing scenic resources. This  
38 system is used to incorporate scenery management principles into the planning, design, and  
39 implementation of projects and activities.
- 40 ■ Use the best environmental design practices in order to harmonize changes in the landscape and  
41 to advance environmentally sustainable design solutions.

- 1 ■ Utilize the Built Environment Image Guide in construction or reconstruction of Forest Service  
2 facilities to ensure consistency with the scenic character of the Southwestern Region.
- 3 ■ Where non-Federal projects occur under Federal lands, managers may work with  
4 owners/developers to achieve scenic integrity objectives for the area.
- 5 ■ Improve areas with poor existing scenic conditions (that is, areas with existing scenic integrity of  
6 “low,” “very low,” or “unacceptably low”) by removing unwanted facilities and revegetating  
7 bare ground.
- 8 ■ Remove or repurpose facilities (buildings, utility poles/lines, communication towers, and other  
9 structures) that are no longer needed or function as intended; retain if they are historic or desired  
10 features and prioritize for maintenance and/or restoration.
- 11 ■ Restore scenic integrity in areas where it has been negatively impacted as other project work is  
12 accomplished and/or funds are available.
- 13 ■ Consider displaying interpretive or informational signs at sites with impacts to scenery to inform  
14 the public about the nature and consequences of such projects or events.
- 15 ■ Cooperate with other entities, such as the New Mexico Department of Transportation, Tribal and  
16 local governments, and commercial and private entities to protect scenic integrity on and  
17 adjacent to the national forest, including along scenic byways.
- 18 ■ Provide scenery management inventory information to local adjacent and neighboring land  
19 management agencies for integration into projects and plans.

## 20 Special Uses

### 21 Background and Description

22 Several acts of Congress authorize occupancy and use of National Forest System lands and interests  
23 in lands administered by the Forest Service. The applicable statutory authority determines the  
24 appropriate special-use authorization. Authorizations are issued when the proposed activities support  
25 the Forest Service mission, are in the public interest, and are consistent with Forest land and resource  
26 management plans. Authorizations are legal documents capturing the agreement to terms and  
27 conditions between the Forest Service and the individual or entity requesting occupancy and use of  
28 National Forest System lands.

29 Special-use authorizations are divided into two categories: recreation and non-recreation. Recreation  
30 special uses include activities related to resorts, ski areas, outfitting and guiding services, recreation  
31 events, commercial filming and still photography, and recreation residences. Recreation special uses  
32 are commercial in nature and generate revenue for the Forest Service as well as the local community.

33 Non-recreation special uses include activities related to communication sites, rights-of-way/road  
34 access, research and utilities including powerlines, oil and gas pipelines, telephone lines and water  
35 transmission pipelines, and military training. Special uses authorizations are administered in a  
36 manner to protect the environment, promote health and safety, and serve the public.

37 Communication sites have been developed on the Cibola National Forest, and play a critically  
38 important role in ensuring electronic connections across the Nation. Requests for use of Federal  
39 lands for communications sites are predicted to increase in the future as the population grows and  
40 new technologies emerge. Requests to use Federal lands for utilities transmission and energy  
41 development are also predicted to increase due to higher demand.