



Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts



What is a Forest Plan?

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A forest land and resource management plan, or forest plan, provides broad program level direction for strategic management of the national forest land and its resources. Future projects carry out the direction in this forest plan by planning and implementing site-specific projects. The forest plan does not contain a commitment to select any specific project.

A plan:

- is developed through an ongoing public process and is science-based.
- uses the best available scientific information to inform the planning process.
- provides a framework for integrating management and for guiding project and activity decision-making.
- does not authorize projects or activities, or commit the Forest Service to take action, or regulate uses by the public. In other words, no site-specific decisions are expected to be made in a forest plan.
- should not repeat laws, regulations or program management policies, practices and procedures that are in the Forest Service Directive System.

Cibola Forest Plan Organization by Chapter

Chapter 1 – Introduction

- **Plan Area:** Brief description of the area and map
- **Plan Background:** Purpose, development, content, organization, etc.
- **Roles and Contributions:** Every plan must describe the distinctive roles and contributions of the plan area to ecological, social, and economic sustainability within the broader landscape. This section describes the brief “niche” for each ranger district based on history, characteristics, etc. It also serves as the collective “vision” of the future for each unit and the Forest.

Chapter 2 – Forest-wide Plan Components and Management Approaches

Chapter 2 is organized by ecological and socioeconomic topics. Topics include forests, watersheds, recreation, cultural history, etc.



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- **Background and Description:** This information is not plan direction, but gives the reader a brief sense of the history and/or description of the resource topic area at the time of the writing of the plan. The background and description information also provide a contrast to the desired conditions.
- **Desired Conditions:** are descriptions of specific social, economic, and/or ecological characteristics of the plan area, or a portion of the plan area, toward which management of the land and resources should be directed. They must be described in terms that are specific enough to allow progress toward their achievement to be determined, but do not include completion dates. They describe the aspiration picture of the Cibola. They are not commitments or final decisions approving projects or activities; rather, they guide the development of projects and activities. The Cibola released a set of draft desired conditions to the public in July 2015 and the comments received on that document have guided the development of this preliminary draft plan.
- **Objectives:** are concise, measurable and time-specific statement of a desired rate or progress toward a desired condition or conditions and should be based on reasonably foreseeable budgets. In some ways, objectives set the intent for management direction. This preliminary draft plan does not contain objectives at this time because it is too soon for the Cibola to set that intent. Feedback received on this preliminary draft plan will help guide the development of objectives.
- **Standards:** are mandatory constraints on project and activity decision-making, established to help achieve or maintain desired condition or conditions, to avoid or mitigate undesirable effects, or to meet applicable legal requirements. Standards differ from guidelines in that standards do not allow for any deviation without a plan amendment.
- **Guidelines:** are constraints on project and activity decision-making that allows for departure from its terms, so long as the purpose of the guideline is met. Guidelines are established to help achieve or maintain desired condition or conditions, to avoid or mitigate undesirable effects, or to meet applicable legal requirements. A guideline allows for departure from its terms, so long as the intent of the guideline is met. Deviation from a guideline must be specified in the decision document with the supporting rationale. When deviation from a guideline does not meet the original intent, a plan amendment is required.
- **Management Approaches:** - Management approaches do not offer plan direction and are not required components, but describe to the reader an approach or strategy to manage the unit to achieve a desired condition. Management approaches often convey how plan components work together to achieve the desired condition. They may also describe context, intent, priorities, partnership opportunities or



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coordination activities, needs for surveys, inventories or assessments, or approaches to risk and uncertainty. Not every resource topic area has a management approach heading. Changes to management approaches do not require plan amendments. Common management approaches to several topical areas could be summarized in one section.

Chapters 3 – Management Areas and Designated Areas

- **Management Areas:** describe how plan components apply to specific parcels of National Forest System land, with locations shown on maps. Management areas are delineated areas with a common set of plan components that differ from the Forest-wide plan components and are established to meet specific management needs. Management Areas are based on purpose.
- **Geographic Areas:** also describe how plan components apply to specific parcels of National Forest System land, also with locations shown on maps. Geographic Areas are delineated areas with a common set of plan components that differ from the Forest-wide plan components and are established to address the needs of a specific area. Geographic Areas are based on place.
- **Designated Areas or Areas Recommended for Designation:** is an area or feature identified and managed to maintain its unique special character or purpose. These areas may be designated administratively or by Congress. Examples of administratively designated areas are experimental forests, research natural areas, scenic byways, botanical areas, recommended wilderness areas, and significant caves. Examples of congressionally designated areas are national heritage areas, national recreational areas, national scenic trails, wild and scenic rivers, and designated wilderness areas. Areas designated by Congress (or by the Secretary of Interior) are withdrawn from the operation of the U.S. Mining Laws, subject to valid existing rights.
- All of the above types of areas will have desired conditions, objectives, guidelines and/or standards specific to the area.

Chapter 4 – Suitability

National Forest lands are generally suitable for a variety of uses consistent with the purposes for which they are administered (outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fisheries). Lands within a plan area identified as suitable for various multiple uses or activities must be consistent with the desired conditions applicable to those lands. Areas that are not suitable for a particular activity or use are



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those where the use is not compatible with desired conditions for the area. This does not mean the use is prohibited in that area, but the activity or project would require a NEPA decision. The suitability of lands need not be identified for every use or activity, nor for every acre of the plan area. The identification of an area as suitable for various uses is guidance for project and activity decision-making and is not a commitment or a final decision approving projects and activities. The only required suitability analysis in a forest plan is for timber suitability.

- **Timber Suitability:** Every plan must identify those lands that are not suitable for timber production as required by the National Forest Management Act. Areas unsuitable for timber production are those that are either not desirable or not feasible to manage for periodic harvests of forest products. For example, grasslands restoration may require cutting trees which can be sold, but the intent is to maintain the area as grasslands, not for timber production.

Chapter 5 –Plan Monitoring Program

- **Monitoring Program:** Every plan must include a monitoring program. Monitoring information enables the responsible official to determine if a change in plan components or other plan content that guide management of resources on the plan area may be needed.

Other Sections

Glossary and Acronyms: Defines technical terms and acronyms

- **Literature Cited:** Summary of scientific citations and publications
- **Appendix A – Glossary of Terms:** Definitions of key terms used throughout plan document.
- **Other Appendices:** Additional topics that may require further detail or maps, including the following:
 - Plant Names: Common, Latin, and Spanish
 - Plan Revision Core Themes
 - Proposed Management Areas and Draft Alternatives
 - Proposed Management Areas and Draft Alternatives Maps
 - Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Maps
 - Scenic Integrity Levels for Scenery Management System Maps
 - Phase III Wilderness Inventory and Areas with Wilderness Character Maps
 - Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers Maps