

Forest Plan Revision Update –Sept 2016



CARSON NATIONAL FOREST

Wilderness Process as Part of Forest Plan Revision



Forest Plan Revision

The Carson NF began revising its forest plan in February 2014 and completed an assessment of current conditions and trends in September 2015.

The Carson NF has completed the inventory and evaluation steps of the wilderness recommendation process and has begun developing plan components for the management of forest resources as part of its draft proposed plan.

The public can find up to date information on our forest plan revision and provide comments at any time on wilderness evaluation, analysis, and recommendation.

Wilderness as Part of the Draft Proposed Plan

PLAN REVISION As a part of the forest plan revision process, the Forest Service is required to inventory National Forest System lands, evaluate if the lands are suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, and determine whether to recommend any such lands for wilderness designation.

INVENTORY The preparatory stage to identify what lands should be taken into the evaluation process, based on information obtained during the assessment and from public and governmental participation opportunities.

EVALUATION The very detailed look at the lands identified in the inventory and whether or not they met the established criteria to be considered for wilderness set forth in the 1964 Wilderness Act.

The Carson NF manages 1,486,372 acres.

7.5% is currently designated as wilderness.

The Inventory included 895,897 acres or 60% of the forest.

The evaluation resulted in 70,941 acres or 4.7% having wilderness character.



Wilderness Comments – What we heard from the Public

From mid-January 2016 through August 2016, the Carson NF heard over 2000 comments from the public during meetings, on its interactive website, and by mail and email on both the inventory and evaluation steps of the wilderness recommendation process. The forest asked the public to comment on:

- 1) The criteria that was applied at each step, and
- 2) Whether the criteria had been applied correctly

Most of the comments answered these two questions, but many others addressed why or why not additional designated wilderness would be the best use of the land.

Below are Comments we heard from the Public that will help inform:

- the recommendation of proposed wilderness in our draft proposed plan and/or alternatives, and
- the effects analysis of any recommended proposed wilderness.

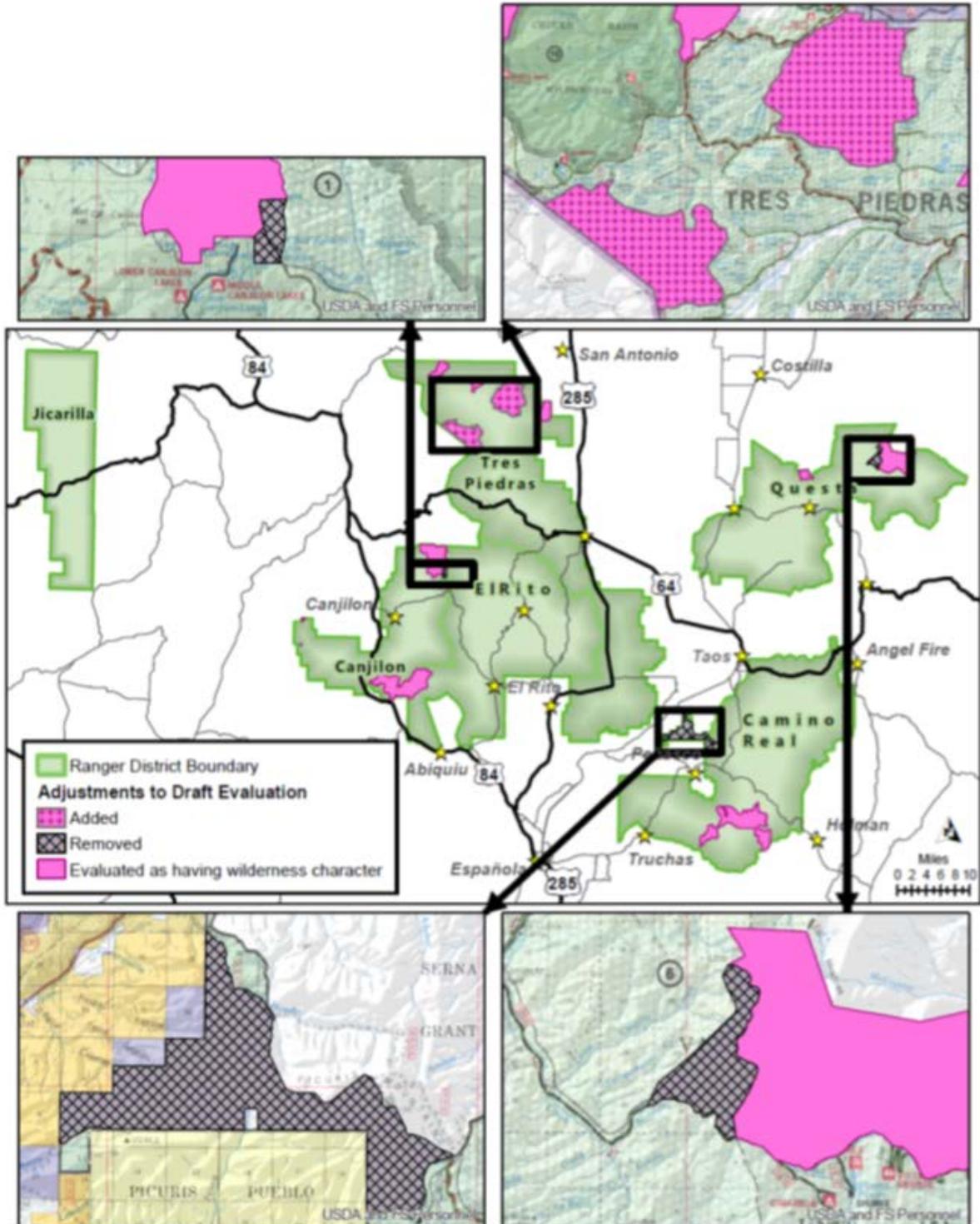
Managing Lands for Wilderness could:

- Provide opportunity for unique and unpredictable experiences not available in other areas of the forest.
- Affect watershed health and increase the risk of catastrophic wildfire by reducing the ability to treat vegetation.
- Protect our watersheds and streams, and the water vital to our communities.
- Prohibit motorized vehicle and equipment, which could limit the ability to manage forested ecosystems.
- Protect and preserve our lands, water, and ecosystems for future generations to enjoy.
- Negatively impact local economies through increased costs to grazing permittees to manage stock tanks, fences, etc. and limit opportunities for communities that depend on firewood to heat their homes.
- Protect and preserve ecosystem integrity and diversity.
- Limit the ability of local communities to access cultural and traditional uses.
- Protect wildlife and wildlife habitat and promote connectivity.
- Make it difficult for the elderly and handicapped to access and enjoy these lands.



What Changed in Final Evaluation?

The maps below show the changes to the draft evaluation map after careful consideration of comments from the public. The completed evaluation map, the evaluation write-up supporting the map, and comments received from the public are available on our [plan revision](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/carsonforestplan) website: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/carsonforestplan



What happens after the Evaluation?

The Carson NF must now consider which, if any, of the 13 areas with wilderness character should be recommended for wilderness in the draft proposed plan and/or as an alternative to the draft proposed plan. This recommendation:

Will be based on input from the public, the government working group, and forest leadership.

Should be “the best use of the land” to meet the needs of the public and provide and maintain forest ecological health.

Will occur as an intermediate step between evaluation and analysis in early 2017.

The draft proposed plan, which will include any potential wilderness areas, is then analyzed as part of the environmental impact statement (EIS), in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Spring 2017.

After this very thorough process the forest may recommend none, some, or all 13 areas for designation as wilderness in its record of decision for a new forest plan. Spring 2018.



Public Engagement

- The public has provided extensive comment during the inventory and evaluation.
- The comments received to date will be valuable in determining which areas should be considered for wilderness in the draft proposed plan and/or as an alternative to the draft proposed plan and during the subsequent analysis step.
- The public can continue to provide comments on wilderness, as the draft proposed plan is developed, during the analysis step, as well as have other opportunities prior to final recommendation.
- For detailed information on our plan go to: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/carsonforestplan Email comments to: carsonplan@fs.fed.us or mail to address below c/o Carson Forest Plan Revision

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For more information go to [Carson Forest Plan:](http://Carson Forest Plan: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/carsonforestplan)
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