

**Gila National Forest  
Silver City, NM  
June 14, 2017  
FOREST PLAN REVISION COMMUNITY MEETING**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**Adam Mendonca**, Forest Supervisor for the Gila National Forest, articulated his commitment to engaging with the public and encouraged participants to share their thoughts and opinions. He reminded participants that the revision process was only in the first phase and asked for community members to continue to stay engaged and attentive throughout the process.

**Alicia Edwards**, Grant County Commissioner for District Three, emphasized the importance of continued public engagement. While the forest plan revision is a long process, it is critically important for the future of the Gila. The Gila National Forest plays a key role in the economic and social success of Grant County. Community members should remain engaged and stay as honest and forthright in their concerns and ideas about the plan.

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## **PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW**

Matt Schultz, Forest Planner, introduced the Gila National Forest planning process and summarized the current phase.

- The current forest plan, which was last revised in 1986, provides management guidance for the US Forest Service (USFS) and all the resources on the Gila National Forest.
- The planning process is embedded in an adaptive management framework that consists of assessing, planning, and monitoring. The revision is currently in the planning phase.
- The Gila National Forest planning team has completed the assessment phase and has posted final versions of the Assessment Report and Need for Change Document on the website. The Notice of Intent has also been published. This marks the beginning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.
- The Need for Change Document provides focus for the next phase of planning. The goal is to develop a Forest Plan that provides vision, strategy, and guidance. Components of the Forest Plan will be developed to meet desired conditions. Desired conditions are the drivers of the Forest Plan.
- The Forest Plan will also include:
  - Objectives
  - Standards
  - Guidelines
  - Suitability
  - Management approaches
  - Geographical areas
  - A monitoring plan
  - Timber suitability
  - Priority watersheds

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- An inventory of lands that may have potential wilderness characteristics
- A wild and scenic river eligibility study
- A list of significant issues and alternatives
- An environmental analysis
- The plan components will be integrated to provide for multiple use, sustainability, ecological integrity, and ecosystem services. The plan components will provide a strategic and practical framework for managing the Gila National Forest that best meets the needs of the people while remaining within the inherent capability of the land and Forest Service authority/fiscal capacity.
- Stakeholder engagement is critical to developing a plan that can be successfully implemented. Engagement will ensure that the process is inclusive and transparent. For this phase of the plan, the Gila National Forest is planning to hold:
  - Community meetings
  - Technical meetings
  - Open houses
  - Field trips
  - Desired conditions workshops (early August)
  - Review and comment periods
- The timeline is as follows:
  - Initial plan components: completed winter of 2017/2018 for feedback
  - Development of preliminary alternatives: early 2018
  - Environmental analysis (EIS): 2018/2019
  - Record of decision: 2019
- It is important that community members are active participants in developing a future vision for the Forest. Please tell the Gila National Forest planning team what is valuable about the Forest and offer ideas on forest management. The Gila National Forest planning team hopes to build on existing partnerships and explore new ways to accomplish land management goals throughout this process.
- For more information, visit the Gila National Forest Plan website: <http://go.usa.gov/h88k> or e-mail [gilaplan@fs.fed.us](mailto:gilaplan@fs.fed.us) .

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### **MEETING PLAN OVERVIEW**

- Participants were encouraged to provide field trip suggestions for areas, issues, management activities, or resources that they would like to visit with a Gila National Forest Service representative. There will be one field trip per district with multiple site visits.
- Participants rotated through three “stations,” each with a different focus related to the Forest Plan Revision.
  - **Station One** asked participants to write desired conditions for the Forest related to different topics (e.g., wildlife, infrastructure, vegetation, etc.).

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- **Station Two** asked participants to assess visual improvements based on whether they were “substantially noticeable.” “Substantially noticeable” is an important term for the Gila National Forest planners to define during the inventory of lands that may have potential wilderness characteristics.
- **Station Three** asked participants to prioritize the benefits from the forest that are most important to them.

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## **DESIRED CONDITIONS**

Nessa Natharius, Forest Ecologist, described the importance of desired conditions in the Forest Plan Revision.

- Desired conditions will be the driver of the Forest Plan Revision. Framing forests in terms of desired conditions is a paradigm shift from the 1986 Forest plan, which was driven by standards and guidelines.
- Desired conditions are management outcomes (not actions). They must be achievable and within the inherent capability of the land. They must also be clear and concise and have enough detail to measure progress.
- Participants were first asked to individually write down several desired condition statements for the topic areas that mattered most to them (Section A, below). Participants then had a more in-depth discussion about their desired management outcomes (Section B, below).

### **A. DESIRED OUTCOMES PROPOSED BY INDIVIDUALS IN WRITTEN FORM**

Participants were asked to write desired condition statements for as many or as few of the following topics as they preferred. Below are the participants’ written statements.

#### **Vegetation**

- Native flora are preserved (strive for both diversity and abundance); invasive plant species are eradicated.
- Riparian areas are protected and not overgrazed. Cattle are excluded whenever possible.
- Invasive species of plants are removed in situations where they are causing significant ecological damage.
- Grassland recovery is made a priority to protect soil and water systems.
- Vegetated areas are managed to fit their designated plan.
- There is an ecosystem that supports a varied fauna and allows species to maintain sustainable levels.
- Habitats are restored to native levels.
- Vegetation is crawling with critters.
- Forest vegetation and riparian areas are intact. Vegetation is sufficient to support wildlife.

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**Soils and Watersheds**

- Soil erosion is minimized. Native soil conditions are restored.
- Soil and water health are considered in the development of any and all grazing restrictions.
- Soils and watersheds are managed with “big picture” systems in mind.
- Keep the forest “thinned,” letting wood be used for timber, so that water is not all mucked up by too many trees. Let “good fire” do its job.
- Watersheds are protected and have adequate vegetation to prevent run-off that causes erosion.
- There are free-flowing waterways.
- Watersheds are restored post fire.
- People are prohibited from driving motor vehicles in the Gila River in all areas of the forest.

**Timber, Fuelwood and Other Forest Products**

- There is better use of brush thinning.
- Local businesses are permitted to harvest small diameter trees outside of wilderness if low-impact techniques are used.
- Timber and fuelwood are harvested in a way that limits visual impact from trails and roads.

**Wildland Fire and Other Fuels Management**

- There is more cooperation between different forest stations to better manage the forest.
- Fuel management practices consider and implement the timber, fuelwood, and forest product economies to the point that they are sustainable and helpful.
- Proper thinning practices are used.
- Fuels management areas are kept small, but the forest is managed as a whole.
- Thinning is used in the wildland urban interface.
- Protect, as best as possible, against fires. Do what is necessary to reduce risks.
- There is a mosaic of controlled and natural fire with varied age classes of vegetation across the landscape.
- Aggressive fire mitigation programs are used. This includes fuel-load reduction, controlled burns, and thinning.
- Let wildfires burn, but keep them in a controlled area.

**Wildlife**

- There are more Mexican Wolf releases.
- Wolves and other threatened and endangered species are managed at a high priority, even when in conflict with other uses.
- Wolves and other predators have healthy sustainable populations with healthy populations of prey species to eat.
- Wolf recovery is supported by Gila National Forest with appropriate plan components.

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- There are recovered populations of threatened and endangered species. Successful native wildlife means a healthy forest with healthy watersheds, riparian areas, and upland areas.
- Education opportunities are developed and in place for citizens to be safely involved in community “anti-poaching” activities.
- There is wildlife everywhere and more reptiles than in a pet store.
- There is no trapping.
- Wildlife is more abundant.
- Wildlife is left alone.

**Recreation and Scenery**

- There is more emphasis on tourism and less emphasis on cattle ranching.
- Signage and directions are provided.
- Current information and specific details (e.g., access and safety) for the Gila and other areas are provided on fishing sites.
- The natural night sky is considered a recreation destination.
- There is good communication from the ranger stations on current trail, road, and other conditions.
- There are more pull-outs from the roads with trails to allow for scenic viewing.
- There are no excess restrictions on camping, dogs, etc. (Do not become Colorado).

**Livestock Grazing**

- The Gila National Forest and ranchers work together on allotment issues.
- Prevent over-grazing. Create better monitoring or regulatory practices.
- Livestock grazing in riparian areas, streams, wetlands, or rivers is prohibited.
- Grazing is prohibited in designated wilderness areas.
- There is clear guidance for grazing rotation and standards for landscape sustainability.
- Rotational grazing is limited.
- Cattle is let back into more of the forest to keep fuels trimmed down.
- Compliance is reassessed the rules for leases is enforced.
- There is minimal fencing and preferably no grazing on public lands. However, ranchers are well-compensated by the public to vacate the allotments.

**Infrastructure (Roads, Trails, Campgrounds, etc.)**

- Non-motorized vehicle use is restricted to designated roads and not allowed in drainages and water courses where damage can cause erosion.
- There are better handicap camping facilities and trails (wheelchair accessible, blind, etc.). There are more trail markers for the visually handicapped, whether that is guides or audio stations. There should be a field trip for the visually handicapped.
- Trails, campgrounds, and roads are maintained. Trails are protected against erosion and adequately marked or blocked off if they are incomplete or damaged.

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- Road systems are sustainable (both financially and ecologically).
- All roads, including primitive roads, are open for use by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and other vehicles. This allows more use, especially for the elderly and handicapped.
- There is an accessible place for people to view the natural night sky.
- There are more low-impact, primitive campgrounds.
- Man-made structures and roads are kept to a minimum. Disturbed and high-use areas are closely monitored for non-native invasive species.
- Roads are maintained as passable for whatever vehicle or critters they are designated.

**Designated Areas**

- The Gila River is designated as a Wild and Scenic Area.
- The Continental Divide Trail (CDT) is completed, fully blazed, and well-maintained.
- The CDT is congressionally designated and managed with consideration of the intent and purpose of the trail.
- The CDT is non-motorized with a half-mile corridor (from centerline to either side).
- The CDT corridor is managed consistently with the Forest Plan component template and supported by volunteer stewardship.
- There are recommendations for robust additions of areas and acreage to the Wilderness Preservation System and the Wild and Scenic River designation.
- All areas that meet the criteria are recommended to Congress as Designated Wilderness Areas.
- No more land is taken away from the public or elderly who cannot hike or bike.
- There are areas designated for the enjoyment of the natural night sky.
- Non-motorized use areas are protected.
- There are designated roads for ATV use outside the wilderness.

**Cultural Resources**

- Archaeological sites are protected.
- There is more public exposure to cultural resources.
- The history and artifacts of the Forest are preserved.
- Wood-gathering areas have a person to verify permits and direct people to trees that are desired for removal.
- Resources are well-inventoried and interpreted in the event of vandalism but left intact as much as possible.
- Resources are protected but available and monitored closely.

**Traditional Cultural Uses**

- The Forest Plan should make an effort to include and focus on traditional uses and co-manage with affected groups (e.g., tribes).

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**Other**

- Forest uses (livestock operations and wildlife populations, timber industry, special uses, recreation, etc.) are used as tools to maintain and improve biodiversity, wildlife habitat, watersheds, soils, and hydraulic integrity, and reduce uncontrolled wildfire.
- There is more law enforcement.
- The Gila National Forest needs a robust effort to obtain scientific data on what is occurring on the ground related to climate change, and should adopt a plan for the changing climate.

**B. GROUP DISCUSSION**

The group discussed desired conditions for wildlife, infrastructure, vegetation, cultural resources, and livestock grazing. The themes from their discussion are captured below.

**Wildlife**

- Wolf recovery programs, which are usually under the jurisdiction of US Fish and Wildlife Service, should be included in the plan.
- Consider high-traffic wildlife areas and make sure all fences are connected and maintained.
- Protect the Gila trout.

**Infrastructure**

- People should not be permitted to drive off designated roads.
- There should be more handicap-accessible trails. It would be helpful to have a point-person/ranger at the trails to provide direction, etc.
- There is a maintenance backlog. The USFS should identify priority road systems and make sure that roads do not damage resources. Decommission roads that are not high-priority.
- There are many deteriorating trails that have become hazardous, with many steep slopes and fallen rocks.
- The USFS could develop partnerships with the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps and organize camps. This could help with the budget.
- There are many people who do not know that the CDT is designated by Congress. It needs to be managed with special consideration.
- Keep infrastructure non-fragmented and usable. Make sure the Forest is accessible to the uses for which it is designated.
- There are issues related to private inholdings, especially with people on-foot in the East Fork River.

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**Vegetation**

- The USFS should start to plan for a dryer and hotter climate and develop contingency plans.
- Biodiversity on vegetated areas should support wildlife and fit into the USFS strategic plan. Riparian plants should be healthy and grow on their own. Wetland areas should be expanded to help prevent fires and provide a healthy environment for sustainable grazing.
- There should be non-native weed control.
- Cheatgrass is an issue. Hiking trails should be monitored for invasive species.
- Many river corridors need attention.

**Cultural Resources**

- The Gila National Forest is rich in culture. It would be great if more information were publicly available. Use the emphasis on cultural resources as a reason to leave the forest alone.
- Native American tribal coalitions should be more involved in forest planning. The USFS should directly involve prominent stakeholders.

**Livestock Grazing**

- Ranchers should be left alone.
- Ranchers and the USFS should cooperate more. The USFS and ranchers could work together to protect the environment.

**Other**

- The USFS should develop a program that acquires scientific data related to climate change.
- The USFS should be required to ensure and coordinate the appropriate amount of maintenance manpower.
- There are several dark sky areas in the Gila National Forest for night sky viewing. These areas should be restricted to non-motorized use only.
- There should be healthy cooperation between the different users.
- Existing rules should be enforced.

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**INVENTORY OF LANDS WITH POTENTIAL WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS**

Eric Flood, Recreation Planner, explained the process for identifying and evaluating lands that may be suitable to recommend to Congress for Wilderness Designation. When Congress passed the original Wilderness Act in 1964, they instructed the Secretary of Agriculture to periodically assess wilderness characteristics on national forests.

- It is required by law and policy that every national forest undertaking forest plan revision must undergo this process, which involves four steps. Each step in the process reduces the number of acres being evaluated:

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- **Step one:** The USFS performs a broad and inclusive inventory of lands that may have potential wilderness characteristics.
- **Step two:** Sites are evaluated for wilderness characteristics. They are evaluated for apparent naturalness, opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, and manageability to protect wilderness characteristics.
- **Step three:** A range of alternatives are analyzed. Inclusion in alternatives is based on the compatibility with the “theme” of each.
- **Step four:** The Forest Supervisor decides which, if any, lands to recommend to Congress for designation. Congress may or may not act upon this recommendation.
- The Gila National Forest planning team is currently in the first step of the process. First, any areas that contain any open roads are excluded, with a 300-foot buffer (which can be adjusted on a case-by-case basis). The planning team will then identify and remove all areas with “substantially noticeable” improvements and installations. Finally, the planning team will remove areas that are “unmanageable as wilderness areas due to their size.” Areas less than 5,000 acres that do not border an existing wilderness area are not generally considered manageable unless they have unique circumstances due to terrain, location, natural barriers, etc.
- As part of the inventory of lands with potential wilderness characteristics process, the Gila National Forest must determine what existing structures and improvements are “substantially noticeable” and exclude them from the inventoried areas.
- Participants were asked to write their responses to the following 3 questions on a sticky note for each of 11 pictures with a manmade structure or improvement in it:
  - Do you think the structure or improvement in this picture is substantially noticeable?
  - Why or why not?
  - Can you think of any change in circumstance that would change your answer to question number one?

**RESULTS OF GROUP EXERCISE (Letters before responses do not connote meaning or value; they have been added to facilitate reading the table below. Each letter corresponds to a single person’s response for that picture.)**

<b>Improvement or Structure</b>	<b>Do you think this picture is substantially noticeable?</b>	<b>Why or why not?</b>	<b>Is there any change in circumstance that would change your answer to #1?</b>
<b>Wildlife Guzzler (with bear)</b>	a. Yes b. Yes	a. It is too noticeable b. It is good for wildlife	a. Bears like it b. It would be obtrusive if it was in disrepair

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<b>Improvement or Structure</b>	<b>Do you think this picture is substantially noticeable?</b>	<b>Why or why not?</b>	<b>Is there any change in circumstance that would change your answer to #1?</b>
	c. Yes	c. It is not natural	c. More natural masonry (not plastic)
	d. Yes	d. An improved water source is okay	d. Make it out of natural materials or native materials
	e. Yes	e. The benefits to wildlife outweigh noticeability	e. No
	f. Yes	f. It is man-made and does not belong in wilderness	f. No
	g. Yes	g. There are safety issues; It is unnatural and ugly	g. Remove it
	h. Yes	h. It is a man-made wildlife water waterer	h. N/A
	i. Yes	i. It is low-profile	i. No change
	j. Yes	j. It requires maintenance	j. N/A
	k. Yes	k. It is man-made	k. It is primitive an okay for wildlife/stock/users but no maintenance except for resource protection
	l. Yes	l. But it could benefit wildlife	l. No
	m. Yes	m. It is a livestock tank	m. N/A
	n. Yes	n. It is man-made and an invasion of nature	n. N/A
	o. Yes	o. It is man-made	o. Not sure; it provides water for critters
	p. Yes	p. It is a stock tank	p. N/A
	q. No	q. It looks similar to a natural spring	q. Make sure building materials in nature look natural
	r. No	r. It is small and benefits wildlife	r. N/A
	s. No	s. It is low-profile	s. No change

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<b>Improvement or Structure</b>	<b>Do you think this picture is substantially noticeable?</b>	<b>Why or why not?</b>	<b>Is there any change in circumstance that would change your answer to #1?</b>
	t. No u. No v. No w. No x. No y. No	t. It is low-profile, and generally not visible in a large area u. It is low-profile v. It is necessary for hydration and fire safety w. Improved water sources exist in wilderness areas now x. Water tanks for grazing are appropriate infrastructure y. It is low to the ground and fits into the landscape	t. No u. Significant water resource v. No w. No x. Create tanks to prevent animal immersion and possible drowning y. Be careful about moving animals into a specific area
<b>Wildlife Guzzler</b>	a. Yes b. Yes c. Yes d. Yes e. Yes f. Yes g. Yes h. Yes i. Yes	a. It is man-made b. Materials are reflective and modern c. Someone is tracking precipitation d. It is unnatural e. It has an unnatural appearance f. The nature of the water tank is not in keeping with wilderness characteristics g. It is helpful to wildlife and horse trekkers h. It is man-made with foreign materials i. N/A	a. Maintain it only if needed for resource protection b. It does not belong in wilderness. c. If it were ten miles away from vehicular access d. No e. N/A f. Remove it or do not consider it as potential wilderness g. It is okay if it is out of sight of tranquil or wild areas h. Remove it i. Hide it discretely

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<b>Improvement or Structure</b>	<b>Do you think this picture is substantially noticeable?</b>	<b>Why or why not?</b>	<b>Is there any change in circumstance that would change your answer to #1?</b>
	j. Yes k. Yes l. Yes m. Yes  n. Yes  o. Yes p. Yes  q. Yes  r. Yes  s. No  t. No	j. It requires maintenance k. It is an eyesore l. It is a wildlife waterer m. It is large and made from durable materials n. It does not seem necessary o. N/A p. It is man-made and intrusive q. The whole area is part of a bigger system r. It is a man-made addition s. It is non-mechanical and consistent with water management t. Guzzlers exist now in wilderness areas	j. N/A k. Invisibility cloak l. No m. Remove it  n. N/A o. It could be removed p. N/A q. N/A r. No s. If access were allowed t. No
<b>Aging Cabin</b>	a. Yes b. Yes  c. Yes d. Yes e. Yes  f. Yes  g. Yes	a. It needs to stay b. There is evidence of abandoned habitation  c. It is an interesting cultural site d. It is a good example of primitive existence e. It is a man-made structure but made of natural material and has historic value f. It is made from natural/historic materials g. It is historical	a. No b. If hikers had to hike more than five miles to see it c. No d. It could rot away e. If it were reconstructed  f. No g. N/A

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<b>Improvement or Structure</b>	<b>Do you think this picture is substantially noticeable?</b>	<b>Why or why not?</b>	<b>Is there any change in circumstance that would change your answer to #1?</b>
	<p>h. Yes, but it should be exempt</p> <p>i. Yes, but it adds to the overall value</p> <p>j. Yes</p> <p>k. Yes</p> <p>l. Yes</p> <p>m. Yes</p> <p>n. Yes</p> <p>o. Yes</p> <p>p. Yes</p> <p>q. Yes</p> <p>r. No</p> <p>s. No</p> <p>t. No to cabin, yes to signage</p> <p>u. No</p> <p>v. No</p>	<p>h. Historic resources are okay in wilderness; they add another dimension</p> <p>i. It is a historic artifact</p> <p>j. Historic</p> <p>k. It is man-made</p> <p>l. It is old</p> <p>m. It is man-made but might have historical significance</p> <p>n. There is a structure and sign post</p> <p>o. But it is historical in nature</p> <p>p. It is historical</p> <p>q. But it looks historic</p> <p>r. It is an example of historical use</p> <p>s. Humans came and went</p> <p>t. It is not maintained and consists of natural materials</p> <p>u. It is historical</p> <p>v. It blends into the landscape</p>	<p>h. Get rid of the sign</p> <p>i. If it burns</p> <p>j. Get rid of it</p> <p>k. N/A</p> <p>l. No maintenance except for safety. It tells a story and allows users to contemplate landscape in context</p> <p>m. If historical significance was identified and documented</p> <p>n. Remove the sign posts if the structure has historical significance</p> <p>o. N/A</p> <p>p. Leave it</p> <p>q. N/A</p> <p>r. People leave evidence for generations</p> <p>s. N/A</p> <p>t. N/A</p> <p>u. Leave it alone</p> <p>v. No</p>

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<b>Improvement or Structure</b>	<b>Do you think this picture is substantially noticeable?</b>	<b>Why or why not?</b>	<b>Is there any change in circumstance that would change your answer to #1?</b>
	w. No  x. No	w. Historic structures exist in the wilderness right now  x. Historic infrastructure is appropriate in the human use of the landscape	w. No  x. No
<b>Lookout Tower and Communication Site</b>	a. Yes  b. Yes  c. Yes  d. Yes  e. Yes  f. Yes  g. Yes  h. Yes  i. Yes  j. Yes  k. Yes  l. Yes	a. It dominates the scenery in the entire area  b. It is on top of a mountain; it is beneficial for communication  c. The building is historic; the tower is not  d. It is a man-made installation and should not be in wilderness  e. There is too much infrastructure  f. It may prove important for fire watch  g. It is a man-made structure  h. It is needed for fire protection and may be historic  i. The metal antenna can be seen from far away  j. There is too much technology and structure  k. It is a high-tech structure that requires access and maintenance  l. It shows infrastructure	a. Not if it is on a distance peak for most of the area  b. Paint a different color  c. Remove it; depends on how obvious it is to nearby trails.  d. The lookout could remain if tower is removed  e. Remove it  f. No road to tower  g. If it were never built  h. Should be kept in repair  i. Take down metal and leave fire tower  j. No  k. No  l. Probably not going away

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	m. Yes n. Yes o. Yes p. Yes  q. Yes r. Yes  s. Yes  t. Yes u. Yes  v. Yes  w. No x. No	m. It is a major communication system site n. But what is it for? Is it necessary? o. It is obvious p. It is man-made  q. N/A r. Electrical lines have no place in a wilderness area s. It is a structure with a function other than recreation or forest use t. It is an eyesore u. It is prominent and permanent v. It shows the human interface w. It requires maintenance x. It has to be seen in a larger context: a tower on top of a mountain is critical infrastructure	m. N/A n. N/A o. No p. Historic: only maintain for safety or historic need q. It should be excluded r. No  s. Yes, if the structure were gone t. Remove it u. Remove it v. Not much "green paint" w. N/A x. No
<b>Solar Panel</b>	a. Yes b. Yes  c. Yes d. Yes	a. Ugh b. Materials are modern, reflective, and man-made so they stand out in the environment. c. It is not natural d. Someone paid for it	a. No b. No  c. If it was just a lease holder's pump power d. No

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	e. Yes  f. Yes g. Yes  h. Yes  i. Yes  j. Yes k. Yes l. Yes  m. Yes n. Yes  o. Yes  p. Yes  q. Yes  r. Yes  s. No  t. No	e. It is modern  f. It is modern/unnatural g. It is too large and intrusive  h. A big square solar panel does not fit into landscape  i. It would be obtrusive if in a wild area  j. Does it drive a pump? k. It is man-made l. It is out of place in the wilderness  m. It requires maintenance n. It is part of a major infrastructure  o. It is contemporary and man-made  p. It is a man-made unit  q. It is an invasion of nature r. Wilderness should not need electricity for any reason  s. It is there to help obtain scientific data and measure the health of the wilderness  t. It serves a purpose for forest management	e. If part of a grazing lease holder's water system, move it out of sight f. Remove it g. Exclude from wilderness  h. It looks new  i. Move it out of sight  j. Conceal it better k. Remove it l. Evidence of critical need for communication  m. N/A n. N/A  o. N/A  p. No  q. It could be more sensitively installed r. If it was crucial for powering emergency response stuff  s. N/A  t. No
<b>Clear-Cut Area</b>	a. Yes	a. It is destructive clear-cutting	a. Plant seedlings and wait 50 years

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	b. Yes	b. Clear-cutting is not compatible with the wilderness	b. No clear-cutting
	c. Yes	c. It is a disturbance	c. Thinned versus clear-cut; manually versus mechanically
	d. Yes	d. N/A	d. It depends where it is
	e. Yes	e. It is a scar on the landscape	e. It will heal over time
	f. Yes	f. A large clear-cut is substantially noticeable	f. Clean up the site
	g. Yes	g. It is an unnatural practice and environmentally destructive	g. No
	h. Yes	h. Do not clear-cut	h. Use selective thinning
	i. Yes	i. It is managed land	i. It needs maintenance
	j. Yes	j. It is a large area	j. If it was going to be allowed to revegetate it would become not substantially noticeable. We need to manage landscapes to improve naturalness and temporary features that lend themselves for more natural systems.
	k. Yes	k. Manage land for the long-term	k. Is this on a trail? Make it safer for humans, but no change. Slow deforestation.
	l. Yes	l. Clear-cuts are not natural	l. Let it regrow?
	m. Yes	m. It is de-forested; looks like it was used by a commercial entity	m. No

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	n. Yes  o. Yes p. Yes  q. Yes r. Yes  s. Yes  t. No  u. No   v. No	n. "gtfo" logging  o. It is destroyed habitat p. Shows how awful we are  q. Cut timber r. It shows a major logging operation s. It is a clear-cut logging operation t. But the land should be left to recover u. Land will recover and keep companies from clear-cutting as a tactic to eliminate wilderness v. Fire burn area? It needed to be cut	n. If the area is being rehabilitated o. Not wild at all p. Use selective cutting that preserves habitat q. No r. Restore or let nature repair it s. N/A t. N/A u. It needs to be cleaned up better  v. Prohibit clear-cutting and replant
<b>Fish Barrier</b>	a. Yes  b. Yes c. Yes d. Yes e. No  f. No  g. No h. No i. No j. No k. No l. No  m. No	a. Yes, but it is what is sought b. It is a unique feature c. It is natural beauty d. It needs maintenance e. It is useful for animals and human recreation f. There are no structures in sight g. It is not noticeable h. It is scenic i. It is not obvious j. It is natural k. It looks natural l. It could be natural  m. It blends into the background	a. No maintenance needed b. If it were not a waterfall c. Diversions d. N/A e. N/A  f. N/A  g. Keep it h. N/A i. No j. No k. N/A l. What does it look like up/down river? m. No

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	n. No o. No  p. No q. No r. No	n. It appears to be natural o. Natural appearance  p. Assuming the pole to the right is taken out q. Historic structures exist now in wilderness areas r. Most people would not know what this is!	n. N/A o. If changes were made so that it did not look natural p. Yes, if I was standing on a picnic table q. No r. No
<b>Windmill</b>	a. Yes b. Yes  c. d. Yes e. Yes f. Yes  g. Yes h. Yes  i. Yes j. Yes k. Yes  l. Yes	a. Water is important in the desert b. It must work and still be in use  c. Just one windmill is okay d. Useful, but not in a wilderness area e. There are impacts to infrastructure for cattle f. Grazing infrastructure distracts from natural appearance g. It is man-made; does not belong in the wilderness h. It is out of place and too tall i. It needs maintenance j. It is mechanized k. Highly visible; could be unsafe; needs to be maintained l. Part of the heritage and multi-use philosophy	a. No b. It could still be wilderness while being grazed c. N/A d. Yes, keep in repair so it will not be an eyesore e. Not really f. Removal or utilize more naturally-appearing infrastructure g. No h. Use a round solar panel i. N/A j. No k. Remove it l. Remove it

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	m. Yes	m. It is obviously a man-made structure	m. It is not obtrusive and it is needed for livestock. What is the livestock impact in this area and how much energy does the windmill generate?
	n. Yes	n. The height makes it visible from longer distances	n. It is okay to include if not a high-density area
	o. Yes	o. It is man-made but fits with landscape and provides water	o. N/A
	p. Yes	p. Construction and stand-alone installation	p. Remove windmill
	q. Yes	q. It is man-made	q. No
	r. Yes	r. It provides water for livestock	r. N/A
	s. Yes	s. Livestock grazing and water well	s. N/A
	t. Yes	t. There is a windmill	t. Take out the windmill
	u. Yes	u. It requires limited mechanical service	u. Non-solar or wind-powered
	v. No	v. It helps the wildlife and is non-invasive	v. N/A
	w. No	w. It is a wildlife resource	w. N/A
	x. No	x. Windmills exist in current wilderness areas	x. No
	y. No	y. Grazing is allowed so it does not detract from wilderness experience	y. No
<b>Range Fence</b>	a. Yes	a. It is man-made	a. N/A
	b. Yes	b. Fence lines other than wilderness boundaries interfere	b. Removal

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	c. Yes	c. Buildings are not compatible with wilderness	c. No
	d. Yes	d. The buildings are noticeable	d. Remove buildings
	e. Yes	e. There are utilities, buildings, roads, fences	e. No
	f. Yes	f. Highway, fence, out of focus houses, power lines	f. No
	g. Yes	g. It flows with the landscape	g. No
	h. Yes	h. Development of inholding?	h. Not really
	i. Yes	i. Human habitation	i. Remove roads, fence, etc.
	j. Yes	j. There is a lot going on here. Where to start?	j. No
	k. Yes	k. Developed road, fence, utility lines, buildings	k. Too developed to change
	l. Yes	l. Roads, powerlines, etc. Not likely to change	l. Not changeable
	m. Yes	m. There is a road going through	m. N/A
	n. Yes	n. This area is near a road	n. While noticeable, it fits the setting
	o. Yes	o. Many signs of man, flat terrain	o. If excluded, nearby land could still be included
	p. Yes	p. Human infrastructure	p. Okay to include if not in a high-density area
	q. Yes	q. A major livestock feeding area	q. N/A
	r. Yes	r. Significant and permanent infrastructure	r. Probably not feasible for wilderness
	s. Yes	s. But it needs to stay	s. No

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	t. Yes u. Yes v. Yes w. No x. No y. No z. No aa. No bb. No cc. No	t. There is a highway through it u. There are humans on the road and grazing v. There are power lines and other structures w. Humans came and went x. It is historical and decaying y. It shows old usage z. It blends into the natural landscape and it might be of historical significance aa. It has minimal visual and other impact bb. It is an historical structure; it is interesting and aesthetically pleasing cc. It is a vast open space; the view encompasses more than structures	t. N/A u. No v. N/A w. N/A x. No y. If it became a hazard z. Burns down aa. Time will take care of it bb. No change cc. No
<b>Aging Corral</b>	a. Yes b. Yes c. Yes d. Yes e. Yes f. Yes	a. It is unsafe b. It blends in with surroundings c. Natural materials d. It is man-made e. But it is not a problem for wilderness designation f. How is the current user collecting cows?	a. Yes, if structures were removed b. No c. No d. Another 100 years of decomposition e. N/A f. Where is the road?

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	g. Yes	g. It is man-made	g. It will decompose or burn
	h. Yes	h. It is man-made but historic	h. Natural deterioration would make it unnoticeable
	i. Yes	i. It should be maintained	i. N/A
	j. Yes	j. It is man-made	j. No. Allowing it to slowly deteriorate helps tell history of area with minimal infrastructure
	k. Yes	k. It is man-made but deteriorating	k. Will eventually rot into the earth
	l. Yes	l. It looks dangerous	l. Rusty nails and wires removed
	m. Yes	m. But it is important to remember the past	m. No
	n. Yes	n. It is infrastructure	n. If infrastructure continues to deteriorate it can become wild
	o. Yes	o. But perhaps it is historical	o. N/A
	p. No	p. It is deteriorating and non-mechanical	p. Active use and connected to maintained access
	q. No	q. Humans came and went	q. N/A
	r. No	r. It looks historic or from another era	r. No
	s. No	s. It is a testament to historical use	s. N/A
	t. No	t. It is obsolete/historic	t. N/A
	u. No	u. It is not in active use	u. Leave unchanged
	v. No	v. This is a part of history	v. Leave it alone!

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<b>Improvement or Structure</b>	<b>Do you think this picture is substantially noticeable?</b>	<b>Why or why not?</b>	<b>Is there any change in circumstance that would change your answer to #1?</b>
	w. No  x. No  y. No  z. No	w. Historic features exist in many wilderness areas  x. Fits into landscape  y. Historical infrastructure out of natural materials will decay with time  z. Old corrals, fencing, and other infrastructure is not substantially noticeable (i.e., not a detraction from wilderness experience)	w. No  x. It will fall down  y. N/A  z. N/A
<b>Aging Range Fence</b>	a. Yes  b. Yes  c. Yes  d. Yes  e. Yes f. Yes g. No  h. No  i. No  j. No	a. But perhaps it is historical  b. It is not natural  c. Natural materials  d. It is not a problem, particularly if historic.  e. Middle of a meadow f. Historic value g. It shows humans came through but could not stay  h. It speaks to historical habitation  i. It looks like it is from a different era  j. It is beautiful	a. N/A  b. Another 100 years of decomposition c. Not if it is allowed to go back to nature  d. N/A  e. Yes f. More remote area g. Let infrastructure deteriorate  h. N/A  i. No  j. No

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	k. No	k. It is obsolete and historical	k. N/A
	l. No	l. Humans came and went	l. N/A
	m. No	m. Old fencing adds to the wilderness experience	m. No
	n. No	n. Historic structures exist in current wilderness areas	n. No
	o. No	o. Historic infrastructure made of natural materials will decay over time	o. N/A
	p. No	p. It fits into the landscape	p. It will be gobbled up by termites
	q. No	q. It may be useful	q. Will return to nature

**VALUES AND PRIORITIES ON FOREST SERVICE LAND**

Chris Armatas and Bill Borrie from the University of Montana led a prioritization exercise. Participants were asked to prioritize the benefits from the forest that are most important to them. The final report from Chris Armatas and Bill Borrie will present the diversity of opinions as well as the similarities among participants.

**PUBLIC COMMENT CARDS AND MEETING EVALUATION**

On a scale from “not good” to “very good,” 14 people indicated that the meeting was “very good” and two people indicated that the meeting was between “not good” and “very good.” Participants suggested the following improvements:

- Logistical issue: The USFS should reserve better rooms for discussion. It was very difficult to hear and participate.
- There were audio issues. Reserve small rooms for each group.

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- Where is the recycle basket?
- The desired conditions station was a little hard to follow.

Written public comments are below:

- All pictures presented are not noticeable to me because they are just part of nature and I grew up around all these items. The exception is the solar panel. Put a tree in front of it.
- No more Designated Wilderness Areas. People cannot use it and the Gila already has wilderness. Use common sense when dealing with lost people!
- I value wilderness, trails, dispersed camping, access to wild and scenic areas by non-motorized means, modest timber/mineral resource development in non-sensitive areas, access for mountain biking, low-cost opportunities for the public, trail maintenance, and wildlife habitat. I am opposed to expanded motorized access, increasing fees for camping and park access, and a focus on motorized access to forest resources.
- From my short time in New Mexico, I have come to love the Gila precisely for its vastness and its pristine, relatively undeveloped condition. While I understand resources such as copper and uranium must come from somewhere, and that dollars are tight, I would hope that any plan moving forward would keep development to a minimum—even if that came at an expense to my recreational activities (hiking, biking, camping).
- Put logging and timber industry back in. It would A.) make forest healthier for wildlife; B.) Keep watersheds providing water and forests and downstream and agriculture uses and ultimately municipal uses. Keep managing lightning-caused fires—good job. Do not forget multiple-use, including humans (young and old). No more wilderness: forests should provide economic benefits and are not just for the “privileged and fit” to enjoy. Do not protect the wolves; protect the property rights of livestock owners. Help a Gila River diversion: agriculture users and residents need water for cattle.
- Well done.
- I think the plan should include ways to keep ATV/UTV activities in the Gila. Just a concern of mine.
- Assessment Report, page 548 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph under Special Uses: the statement indicates “competition” will increase. This is inaccurate, misleading, and would motivate activities to address the “competition.” There is no “competition.” The New Mexico Game and Fish determine the number of permits issued.

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## **FIELD TRIP SUGGESTIONS**

Participants provided the following field trip suggestions.

- Mogollon Box: potential wilderness addition
- Turkey Run, Gallinas, Railroad and E. Railroad canyons should be included in the Aldo Leopold Wilderness

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- Meadow Creek
- Fuels/thinning to reduce catastrophic wildfire
- Show a site where fire has converted the forest to oak woodland or brush
- Create viable CDT crossing of 180 that connects to trails on LS mesa
- Identify and protect potential CDT corridor in areas between the USFS boundary and LS mesa/Bear Mountain.
- Gila Middle Box
- Closing the gap in the CDT
- Show us a riparian site degraded by cattle grazing and one that is excluded
- The fences protecting designated riparian areas in Sawmill Canyon are down and cattle are entering these areas
- Riparian areas in all levels of condition
- Show a healthy riparian area versus a grazed and driven over area
- Go to Burro's firewood cutting area to see abuse of land/riparian area/wrong trees being cut/ATV trails
- Good connectivity with trails and community in Silver City and CDT
- Iron Creek mesa: show sites where regular fire is doing the work of restoration
- Gila wilderness trail maintenance
- Potential travel/camping areas for people not able to hike or backpack
- A healthy riparian area contrasted with an unhealthy one
- A site where the USFS has implemented a "restoration" harvest
- A site that was severely burned 20-30 years ago to see current condition
- A site that may be proposed for wilderness designation
- Identify potential alternate CDT routes for inclusion in CDT "system" and protect values, especially in Middlefork Gila
- The trail west of Little Creek that comes down from Lilly Park needs work
- If Turkey Creek Hotsprings are part of the wilderness it would be a great trip
- Mineral Creek mine ruins tour of boilers and safe.
- What is the current condition of fire-damaged trails leading from Sacaton Mesa into the wilderness? Are they usable?
- The Centerfire Creek restoration project