INTRODUCTION
Adam Mendonca, Forest Supervisor for the Gila National Forest (GNF), welcomed the group, shared his commitment to engaging with the public, and encouraged participants to share their thoughts and opinions. The goal of these community meetings is to consider the range of alternatives for specific topics related to management of the GNF and gather community feedback on whether there are perspectives that fall outside of the presented range. This input is critical as the GNF begins to analyze the alternatives.

OVERVIEW OF FOREST PLANNING PROCESS
Matt Schultz, Forest Planner on the GNF, provided an overview of the planning process.

- The GNF is in the process of revising its Forest Plan from 1986. This comprehensive document will guide the management of all resources on the GNF for the next 15 years or more. This revision is an opportunity for the knowledge and suggestions of community members to shape the GNF’s future management. In the adaptive framework of planning, which consists of assessing, planning, and monitoring. The GNF is in the middle of the planning phase.

- Forest plans provide integrated direction for social, economic, and ecological sustainability and multiple uses. Forest plans provide overarching guidance, not site-specific direction. Desired conditions drive the plan and paint a picture of the preferred outcomes. Forest plans should be a strategic and practical framework for managing the land in a way that meets the needs of the people. Forest plans should also stay within US Forest Service (USFS) authority, fiscal capacity, and the inherent capability of the National Forest in question.

- The National Forest Management Act (1976) requires that forest plans be revised periodically. The GNF’s 1986 Forest Plan has been amended at various times, but the GNF and surrounding areas have experienced significant changes since 1986. There are also elements of the 1986 Forest Plan that can be carried forward into the revised document.

- The first round of plan phase community meetings took place in June 2017; the GNF received helpful input on the desired conditions for forest management. Since June 2017, the GNF has hosted a range of technical meetings on topics such as sustainable infrastructure, monitoring, local economies, designated areas, multiple and traditional uses, and vegetation management tools. The GNF released a preliminary draft Forest Plan and is in the process of revising the document based on stakeholder feedback. The feedback received has helped the GNF understand the areas in which stakeholder perspectives align or diverge. While there is common ground on certain issues, there are a handful of issues that had multiple perspectives on a change in direction. These significant issues help to drive the development of alternatives.

- When the GNF planning staff received comments on specific topics (e.g., grazing, riparian area management, etc.), they began to sort the input into a range of perspectives. The goal
of this meeting is to ensure that all perspectives are represented in the range of alternatives. If there is an idea presented during one of these community meetings that falls outside of the current range, the GNF could expand the range before conducting its alternative analysis.

- The alternatives represent different ways of managing the Forest and are often grouped by theme on a variety of issues. It is important to note that any "no action" alternatives allow the GNF to continue using the 1986 Forest Plan. There will be an opportunity during the analysis to compare tradeoffs and impacts of the different alternatives. The Forest Supervisor will ultimately make an informed choice among the alternatives based on this analysis. While it is possible to use elements from any alternative on a particular issue in a given decision, the decision must remain within the range that was analyzed, or the analysis would have to be redone to include the element that fell outside of the range.

- It is fairly clear what will be included in the draft Forest Plan for topics for that have no expected change in management direction from the 1986 Forest Plan. The same is true of topics that will have a change from current management direction but for which public comment was consistent in suggesting one approach. The GNF needs community input to ensure that they have captured the range for topics for which there will be a change from the management direction and there was a range of preferences proposed in the public comment.

### REAL-TIME POLLING OF PRELIMINARY RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES AND GROUP DISCUSSION

Matt Schultz provided an overview of the preliminary range of alternatives on several significant issues. Participants provided feedback about the range of perspectives presented for each of the significant issues via real-time polling devices and discussed the outcomes of the polling exercise.

### VEGETATION TYPES ON WHICH TO FOCUS RESTORATION EFFORTS

- During the assessment community meetings, people provided feedback on the trends and conditions that they had observed on the GNF. Community members observed that there was increased woody vegetation (especially with infill in woodlands) and that trees were encroaching into grasslands and other gaps and openings. Several vegetation types have departed from desired conditions. There can be desired conditions for socioeconomic and ecological resources and for vegetation types (e.g., “what do we want our ponderosa pine forests to look like?”). The ability to achieve desired conditions through restoration may be constrained by funding, workforce, and industry capacity. Therefore, restoration efforts on different vegetation types must be prioritized.

- The GNF received a range of comments on this issue. On one end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to focus on grasslands and open woodlands (to the exclusion of other vegetation types). On the other end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to focus restoration efforts on forests and timberland (to the exclusion of other types). In the middle, the GNF received suggestions to focus restoration efforts on a mix of grasslands, woodlands, and forest/timberland types.
Clarifying Questions
Participants asked clarifying questions about the range of alternatives on vegetation types on which to focus restoration efforts. Questions are indicated in italics, followed by the response.

*To what condition is the GNF being restored?*
The goal is to restore the GNF to desired conditions, which are outlined in the preliminary draft Forest Plan.

*Does restoration include the removal of non-indigenous plant life?*
Most people who have submitted comments agree that non-native species should be removed. The range presented for the next issue “Restoration Tools to Use” includes the removal of non-native species.

*Where does logging fit into the range?*
Logging is one of the methods that is included under the “mechanical” type. So the use of more logging to restore the lands is included in the range.

**Polling Exercise**

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**Group Discussion**
- The GNF should focus on pines and native grasses.
- The GNF should reduce the amount of dead timber and reduce timber density.
- The GNF should open up more grasslands and thin pinion-juniper areas.
- Juniper is important to most New Mexicans.

**RESTORATION TOOLS TO USE**
- There are a variety of potential vegetation management tools that can be used to help achieve desired conditions, and each have associated benefits and risks. Community members have observed that there has been re-sprouting of alligator juniper and evergreen oak after restoration treatments are conducted and that these species dominate the understory.
- The GNF received a range of comments on this issue. On one end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to rely on mechanical methods, limit the use of prescribed fire, and use herbicide on noxious, invasive species and re-sprouting alligator juniper and evergreen oak. On the other end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to rely on prescribed fire and wildfire only (excepting the wildland-urban interface, which is usually where the Forest borders private property with developments) and use herbicide on noxious, invasive species.
species only. In the middle, the GNF received suggestions to use a mixture of mechanical, prescribed fire, and wildfire methods.

Clarifying Questions
Participants asked clarifying questions about the range of alternatives on restoration tools to use. Questions are indicated in italics, followed by the response.

Has the GNF used herbicide in the past?
Herbicide has been used on noxious species but not on re-sprouting plants. The GNF used it in Quemado on rabbitbrush in 1996 and 1998.

Are biological (goat) treatments included in this range?
Goats are not included in the range but are an option for restoration.

What information is available online now?
There is a preliminary draft Forest Plan on the GNF website. That document will be updated based on community feedback and analysis.

Polling Exercise

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Group Discussion
Participants discussed the polling results and provided suggestions for reconsidering or expanding the range of alternatives.

- Relying solely on mechanical tools to deal with full-size plants is unrealistic; herbicide should be considered as a tool for managing more than noxious, invasive, or re-sprouting plants. There should be broader herbicide use.
- Using goats as a restoration tool takes grass and forage away from ranchers’ cattle.
- The job of the USFS is to maintain the supply of timber, so if they choose to rely on fire as a restoration tool, they are not achieving this mandate.
- The GNF will decide when to use which restoration tools where, and some residents are concerned about the risk of fire escaping.
- The permittee should be able to discuss options for restoration with their range manager. Whatever happens on allotments should include a discussion with the permittee.
- The GNF should use goats for invasive, noxious plants.
- The GNF should use more mechanical tools and rely less on fire.
- The GNF should rely less on chemical use.
- The GNF should use logging to reduce density. Fire and smoke have a detrimental impact on many residents, the environment, and air quality. Goats are an important tool.
• There should be more logging on the GNF. The Buzzard Fire created a mess, and there is a lot of erosion, noxious weeds, and roasted owls. Herbicide should be used on cedar trees and rabbitbrush.
• The GNF should cut more trees to save the forest. Current management is inadequate and is harming communities and the economies. The GNF should bring back logging to help the communities. If residents need to use a dozer to clean a tank they should not have to go through all the cumbersome requirements.
• The GNF should listen to residents, push where it is possible, thin where it is too rough to use equipment, and burn during the right time of year (not May or June).

RIPARIAN MANAGEMENT
• Riparian areas are affected by the presence of water and are composed of unique vegetation. Riparian areas are more productive than adjacent areas where water is more limited. As a result, these areas are a focal point for human, wildlife, and livestock activities.
• The GNF received a range of comments on this issue. On one end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to maintain the use of livestock grazing in riparian areas but use adaptive management and best management practices to move toward and maintain desired conditions. On the other end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to phase out grazing in riparian areas and increase the distance of the buffer from new road construction.

Clarifying Questions
Participants asked clarifying questions about the range of alternatives on riparian management. Questions are indicated in italics, followed by the response.

Is damage to riparian areas from wildlife considered in this range? It may not always be clear which species are doing the damage.
The current range does not say that wildlife should be considered.

Does this range consider human access? Are riparian areas going to be fenced off so that humans are unable to access them?
Not necessarily. This range does not include human use.

Does the range include vehicle use?
No.

If the water rights are owned by permittees, who is responsible for the maintenance of water tanks?
Individual permits specify who is responsible for water tank maintenance. Maintenance is often a partnership: USFS rangers often help clean tanks with USFS equipment. Modifying permits for maintenance is possible.
Polling Exercise

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Group Discussion
Participants discussed the polling results and provided suggestions for reconsidering or expanding the range of alternatives.

- In the US versus New Mexico case in 1978, the script shows that the outcome was that the cattle owned the water. This year, in the Wade Hage case, it was concluded that the cattle owned the water. The USFS does not own the water.
- A permittee shared that, after a fire occurred on a local range, there were 13 feet of debris left in the tank and the USFS did not help to clean it up.
- Riparian areas should be left open, and fences should be removed. The cattle have as much of a right as wildlife to access that area. Ranchers should have access to water.
- The current range is “do nothing” or “do everything.”
- Riparian areas should be protected.
- Water rights belong to the permittee. Livestock use has been customary and does not harm riparian areas more than wildlife.
- Livestock use should be allowed to continue in riparian areas, but the GNF should use adaptive management and best management practices. Wildlife grazing must be included in the range. The USFS does not own the water rights.
- If one were to compare the areas that are left alone and the areas that are protected, it is clear that protected areas are washed out, and places that are used look good.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING

- Livestock grazing on the GNF contributes to the livelihood of the permittees and the economy of local communities. It is a traditional cultural use of the GNF and one of the multiple-use elements for which the GNF is managed.
- The GNF received a range of comments on this issue. On one end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to increase flexibility of livestock management with fewer strict standards and more guidelines. On the other end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to have more restrictive standards and fewer flexible guidelines. In the middle of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to have a balanced use of standards and guidelines. Standards are mandatory constraints and do not allow for deviation without a Forest Plan amendment; guidelines are also constraints but allow for deviation as long as the intent of the guideline is met and the justification is documented.

Clarifying Questions
Participants asked clarifying questions about the range of alternatives on livestock grazing. Questions are indicated in italics, followed by the response.
**What does “flexibility” mean in this context?**

Flexibility means that permittees will have more options for methods they can use to accomplish the desired outcome. For example, the permit may specify that “permittees should maintain a riparian area by doing A, B, or C.”

**What is the difference between standards and guidelines?**

Standards are mandatory constraints; guidelines are still constraints, but there might be multiple ways to meet the intent of the guideline.

**Will the plan specify who determines what is best for specific allotments (the permittee or the USFS)?**

There is a section in the preliminary draft Forest Plan on collaborative approaches.

**From what source is the GNF getting its input?**

The GNF has been holding public meetings since 2015 to gather input, including community meetings in the local communities including Reserve.

### Polling Exercise

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**Group Discussion**

Participants discussed the polling results and provided suggestions for reconsidering or expanding the range of alternatives.

- Previous management of allotments by the GNF has not benefited the county or state. The standards and guidelines should benefit permittees, residents, the county, and the state.
- Invitations to public meetings such as this should be sent specifically to permittees and other stakeholders.
- A participant responded that their perspective was not represented in the range of alternatives because they do not trust the science.
- The USFS should stay out of range management; range management should be the responsibility of the New Mexico University Range Improvement Taskforce.
- Ranchers take care of the land because it is their livelihood. There should be fewer standards and more flexibility.
- Regulations are needed because the land can get over-used. However, the GNF can over-govern. There must be communication.
- The areas should be monitored to prevent damage.
- The GNF should figure out how many livestock there are now versus five years ago.
- The GNF should allow flexibility relating to historical use and availability of resources and should ensure continued use of the land for livestock.
• The GNF should consult with New Mexico State University range specialists and work with local rangers and permittees to determine grazing guidelines/standards. New Mexico has a lot of elk grazing along with the cattle. The GNF should allow more dirt tanks to be made so that areas do not become overgrazed by cattle or wildlife.

• The GNF should not provide input on livestock grazing; the agency does not know or understand the grazing rights of the American rancher.

• The rancher knows best. Ranges should open up and include wilderness areas.

VACANT GRAZING ALLOTMENTS

• Ten of the 138 grazing allotments on the GNF are vacant.

• The GNF received a range of comments on this issue. On one end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to have no vacant allotments (i.e., to keep them all fully stocked) and to issue permits for vacant allotments. On the other end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to keep these allotments vacant and unused or even remove them from grazing and use them for wildlife and watershed. In the middle of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to use the vacant allotments to increase flexibility and allow current permit holders to use them during times of need such as drought, wildfire, and livestock-wildlife conflicts.

Clarifying Questions

Participants asked clarifying questions about the range of alternatives on vacant grazing allotments. Questions are indicated in italics, followed by the response.

Does “no vacant allotments” mean that the USFS will manage the allotments, but no permittees will be permitted on that allotment?

That means that there would be no permits issued for the vacant allotments. The range includes options to issue permits or not issue them.

Is it legal for the USFS to issue permits for vacant allotments? Allotments are tied to peoples’ deeded land.

There is a process for handling vacant allotments called a grant process. Neighboring permittees are first given the opportunity to take over the allotment, and if they do not want it, other permittees on the GNF would be given the opportunity. If no one wants the permit, then individuals who do not have federal grazing permits could apply.

Who has the final authority to decide who gets the permit?

The local district ranger has the authority to say ‘yes’ or ‘no.’

There are no regulations that provide for the retirement of a grazing permit. How is it possible to remove a permit from grazing?

The options represent the community feedback; there will be further analysis of legality.
Polling Exercise

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Group Discussion

Participants discussed the polling results and provided suggestions for reconsidering or expanding the range of alternatives.

- There should be allotments on existing wilderness areas. Vacant allotments include any area that was an allotment since the GNF was created. The range should specify that permits should be issued for vacant allotments in both wilderness and non-wilderness USFS jurisdictional lands.
- The Wilderness Act specifies that “no prior right shall be removed.” By removing grazing, the GNF would be removing a prior right.
- The Forest Plan should clarify what should be done, depending on the reason the allotment is vacant (i.e., if the reason is X, the GNF should do Y).
- The vacant allotments should be used per the local ranger’s direction.
- Vacant allotment should not be allowed to be given to wildlife. Permits need to be filled. The GNF should maintain the current procedure for allotments.
- The GNF should allow current permit holders to graze vacant allotments. Several vacant allotments have cattle free grazing on them, so it would make more sense to use permits and keep fences maintained so that the GNF can make money off allotments (which should include wilderness areas).
- Groups such as WildEarth Guardians should not be able to buy grazing allotments because they do not own deeded land. They do not use the land for grazing.
- There should never be a vacant allotment.

LAND ADJUSTMENTS

- Since the GNF was created, there have been numerous real estate transactions that have added and subtracted (i.e., adjusted) portions of the area via land exchanges, purchases, donations, and sales. A land exchange entails a piece of property being exchanged for another piece of property of equivalent value. Peak Facilitation Group conducted a web survey to collect stakeholder ideas on how the GNF should conduct these land adjustments in the future.
- The GNF received a range of comments on this issue. On one end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to acquire desirable lands for public access and resource management when available and dispose of isolated, unmanageable lands or lands that support community development when possible. On the other end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to direct more emphasis on land exchanges so that no net loss of private property value in a county occurs and property taxes remain the same.
Clarifying Questions
Participants asked clarifying questions about the range of alternatives on land adjustments. Questions are indicated in italics, followed by the response.

*Does land adjustment mean that the GNF would sell land?*
Yes. The GNF can dispose of land that supports community development. However, it does not mean that there is an outright sale; it is sometimes an exchange or transfer. For example, the GNF has given land to the town of Glenwood for a school area and park.

*When the GNF proposes a land adjustment, is there a public vote?*
The public does not vote; there is usually a discussion with community leaders about the community's needs. Since it is part of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, the Forest solicits comments from the public.

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Group Discussion
Participants discussed the polling results and provided suggestions for reconsidering or expanding the range of alternatives.

- The range specifies that exchanges would mean a no net loss of value for the county. However, because the payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) formula includes population, Catron County residents do not get sufficiently compensated because there are very few residents. There are over 2.5 million acres of GNF land in the county. Changing the PILT formula should be included in the range.
- Permittees have grazing allotment rights and should be compensated for the loss of revenue if a grazing allotment gets sold/transfered.
- The USFS should not purchase any private land.
- There should be a decrease in federal money and land ownership.
- There should be a no net loss in private land. Permittees should be compensated for any net loss to the permit. Taxes should be paid to the County for GNF lands.
- If permittee land is taken away, they should be paid for the land they have lost (including riparian areas).
- It is against the law for the USFS to purchase private property. The GNF should not sell land or give land away; that does not benefit multiple uses.

AMOUNT OF RECOMMENDED WILDERNESS
- Each National Forest undertaking plan revision is required to complete a process of identifying and evaluating lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National
Wilderness Preservation System. The four-step process concludes with a determination of whether to recommend any of the evaluated lands to the US Congress for wilderness designation. Only Congress may designate wilderness. Community members recently had the opportunity to comment during the second step (evaluation), which examines the level of wilderness characteristics on areas of the Forest. During the upcoming third step (analysis), the GNF will consider all the factors that have relevance for areas that may be recommended, not just wilderness characteristics (e.g., impacts to local existing or future forest product uses, effects to restoration needs, defensive space from wildfire/wildland-urban interface, etc.). Different criteria will be applied for each alternative.

- The GNF received a range of comments on this issue. On one end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to recommend no new wilderness. On the other end of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to recommend a significant amount of new wilderness. In the middle of the spectrum, the GNF received suggestions to recommend some new wilderness, taking into consideration other forest uses and restoration needs.

**Clarifying Questions**
Participants asked clarifying questions about the range of alternatives on the amount of recommended wilderness. Questions are indicated in italics, followed by the response.

*A re there maps of the wilderness on the GNF website?*
The GNF recently released a draft evaluation report which has maps that show the level of wilderness characteristics around the Forest. The next step is to evaluate all the factors that are relevant if an area is recommended (e.g., current forest product uses, protection from wildland-urban interface areas, restoration needs, etc.). Getting community input during this phase is critical. There is no map of potential or recommended areas yet.

*Does this range include a significant reduction in the amount of current wilderness?*
That is not included in the range.

*If the GNF identifies an area as wilderness, but it has not yet been acted upon by Congress, does the GNF treat that area as wilderness until it is approved (e.g., restrict motorized use, etc.)?*
The GNF would maintain the characteristic that led to the recommendation.

*Why does the GNF have to consider wilderness?*
The 2012 Planning Rule requires each forest to evaluate wilderness characteristics. This mandate is taken from the Wilderness Act.

**Polling Exercise**

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Group Discussion
Participants discussed the polling results and provided suggestions for reconsidering or expanding the range of alternatives.

- The maps in the draft evaluation report show a big circle where certain areas could be designated as wilderness, but if there are houses in the middle of that circle that is excluded. The mapping strategy is flawed.
- Wilderness areas are discriminatory toward old, young, and disabled populations. That should be included in the range.
- Roadless and primitive areas should be declassified, and management of those areas should return to how it was before they were designated. Any area that has wilderness near a road cuts off access for people to the rest of the Forest.
- There should not be any new recommended wilderness, and existing wilderness should be rolled back. People who do not live in Reserve should not control what happens in the area.
- There should be a reduction in wilderness areas. Roadless and primitive areas should be removed.
- Wilderness areas should be reduced; they hurt communities.

BOTANICAL AREAS
- There are other types of designations open for consideration during the Forest Plan revision process to maintain unique special characteristics or purposes across the landscape. The GNF received a proposal to recommend botanical areas around the GNF. This was not part of the preliminary draft Forest Plan, but GNF planning staff made a logical assumption about the range of alternatives.
- On one end of the spectrum, no botanical areas would be designated. On the other end of the spectrum, there would be more botanical areas for rare plant conservation and education. In the middle of the spectrum, there would be some botanical areas for rare plant conservation and education.

Clarifying Questions
Participants asked clarifying questions about the range of alternatives on botanical areas. Questions are indicated in italics, followed by the response.

Would the botanical areas have restricted public access?
Not necessarily; it is meant to be about education and outreach.

Polling Exercise

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Group Discussion
Participants discussed the polling results and provided suggestions for reconsidering or expanding the range of alternatives.

- The botanical areas should not be in riparian areas, because that would mean those areas would be fenced off from grazing.
- There are already a lot of state-run study and research areas.
- The GNF should not designate any botanical areas or special areas.
- Botanical areas should be protected.
- The GNF should listen to residents on these issues; they have local knowledge. Local people do not want botanical areas.

ARE THERE OTHER TOPICS THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR A RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES?
- The Forest Plan should provide specifics about long-term management of the timber industry. Logging provides income to Catron County.
- Trails are poorly marked, and there are a lot of hikers and bikers who get lost on the Continental Divide Trail and do not have access to water. The signs should indicate the proximity to water sources.
- The USFS should help permittees with the NEPA process for resource improvement projects.
- Fuelwood collection should continue. The GNF has already restricted fuelwood collection to within 200 feet of the roads, but because there are so few roads, there is often no fuelwood left. The GNF should carefully consider where the designated fuelwood collection sites are and whether it is possible to carry the wood in and out without a vehicle.
- When the USFS conducts thinning restoration projects, they cut down small trees and leave the dying, standing trees. The big trees should be removed.
- Roads should be kept open to allow for hunting, which is a key part of the county’s economy.
- Guides and outfitters have too much paperwork to fill out.

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENT
- Hunters and ATV users should be able to access anywhere they want on the GNF.
- Popular trails should remain open and maintained.
- The trails in current wilderness areas are dangerous.
- The GNF should not close any more roads and should open previously closed roads to public use. Roads need to be maintained.
- There should be more logging on the GNF.
- Campgrounds and rest stops must be maintained.
- Hunting is an important industry in Reserve.
- The USFS needs to get rid of NEPA processes; the rules must be updated.
- It would be great if the GNF and the New Mexico State Parks Department put a new park at Snow Lake. An average of 20,000 people visit state parks every year.
- There is an extensive amount of designated wilderness in the area, and it is inaccessible to the average person.
- Dead timber seems to be becoming more prevalent in the area. This creates an over-abundance of fuel for devastating fires. Timber thinning should employ communities while improving forest health.
- The GNF should manage the Forest in a way that is best for the land, not the stakeholders. It is important to ask mother nature what she needs.
- The GNF should use the 1986 Forest Plan. The community has been exploited again and again. The input of residents should be more important than the input of people who do not live in the County. The GNF should follow the law and should not try to change it. There are too many trees, and the GNF should use more mechanical tools to manage the forest.
- The GNF should communicate with residents. It seems like Peak Facilitation was hired to keep the GNF employees from getting hurt.
- The planning process should be more accessible to people from Catron County.
- If USFS lands are called “wilderness,” that land cannot be managed to prevent fires. If fires are set in wilderness by the USFS, that is hypocritical.
- The USFS should be disbanded.
- The GNF should open up more juniper areas for wood cutting use by residents instead of using herbicide. The GNF should also allow people to cut dead oak trees and dead juniper, even though they have growth at the bottom.
- The GNF should provide maps during meetings.
- If the GNF harvests mature trees and let young trees grow, it is a win-win situation.
- Conditions are a mess after the Buzzard fire. Cox Canyon, (i.e., Forest Road 94) is a disaster. Cox Canyon was logged in the early 1990’s. The young growth was about 10-12 feet tall. All that young growth was destroyed in this fire. The Five Springs area is destroyed; the trees, road, and stock tank is full of debris. The stock tank in the Cox Canyon area is not usable to wildlife or grazing cows. The GNF has now installed gates of both ends of the Five Springs area. This is an example of how the GNF mismanages the land. This fire could have been prevented. Several years ago, the Whitewater Baldy fire could have been stopped (damage can still be seen driving the “sawmill road” to Snow Lake/Negrito Fire Base/Mogollon. The grass fire near the North Bar Ranch destroyed more than 50,000 acres of grazing in a few days. In 2005, the Bull Fire was started near Beaverhead and pushed to include Elk Mountain (more than 30 miles away). Many stock tanks were filled with ash and debris. At an annual meeting with the Elk Springs subdivision, a USFS employee commented on how beautiful the mountain would be; but this will not happen in this generation’s lifetime. There were also fires that took place on the other side of the mountain; driving through Luna and Alpine is devastating. There have been too many "controlled" burns; all these fires were mismanaged by the GNF and a waste of natural resources.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS
Participants submitted written comments. They are below.
Why did the GNF not replant pines after the Wallow fire?
GNF Response: As part of the Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation for the Wallow Fire, the Forest Service did spread grass/forb seed and mulch to help manage unacceptable risk to human life, safety, and property and encourage short-term immediate stabilization and long-term rehabilitation.

Reforestation success is unpredictable in the Southwestern climate, in the sense that it can take decades for climatic conditions to produce a good cone crop that subsequently aligns with conditions that support germination, establishment and growth of seedlings. Natural regeneration has been the Forest’s preferred approach to reforestation in the recent past, but large scale disturbances have resulted in areas with inadequate seed sources. The Gila National Forest is in the process of developing an operational reforestation and cone collection strategy to address this issue where it can.

Will allotments be more restrictive or more lenient regarding how many head are allowed per lease? Will fees per head increase?
GNF Response: The Forest Plan does not get into the specific head numbers allowed per lease. Identifying the range of permitted number is part of project level NEPA for each grazing allotment. During this process typically a range of permitted numbers is identified because this gives the Forest and the permit holder the ability to adapt to annual conditions like drought and/or high forage production years when precipitation levels are higher than the average year. The Forest Plan does not regulate head fees; that is set at the national level.

Why was a notice for the meeting not posted in Glenwood? All landowners should have been notified about this meeting.
GNF Response: The meeting was announced via emails and letters to the Forest Plan Revision contact list (which contains over 900 people), press release to all the local newspapers, social media, flyers posted in Quemado, Reserve, Silver City, and Truth or Consequences. We will post flyers in the Glenwood area for future meetings. Anyone may sign up to be on our contact list by emailing gilaplan@fs.fed.us or calling 575-388-8280.

What is the access plan?
GNF Response: There is not a standalone access plan. But the preliminary draft Forest Plan is highly supportive of access based on stakeholder input and on the ground conditions.

NEXT STEPS
- For more information, participants are encouraged to visit the Forest Plan revision website at http://go.usa.gov/h88k or email gilaplan@fs.fed.us.
- The GNF planning team will reconsider the preliminary range of alternatives based on the feedback received during this round of community meetings. Then, the GNF will analyze the
alternatives and release a draft Forest Plan and draft EIS for feedback in 2019. The GNF will revise those draft documents based on stakeholder feedback.

- District Ranger John Pierson thanked participants for attending and emphasized the importance of continued engagement during the alternative development and analysis phase.