



# U.S. Forest Service Executive Summary

## National Forest System

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### **Topic: Release of the Coconino National Forest Final Land and Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement**

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**Issue:** The Coconino National Forest (CNF) has released its Final Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), revising the current 1987 Coconino National Forest Plan using the provisions of the 1982 Planning Rule.

#### **Summary/Key Points:**

The CNF encompasses more than 1.8 million acres of Coconino, Gila, and Yavapai Counties in north-central Arizona, in proximity with four other national forests, private and tribal lands, and lands administered by the State of Arizona and National Park Service. The CNF supports important recreation, timber and non-timber forest products, and grazing related jobs in the local area; resulting in about 5,500 jobs and nearly \$212M in income generated annually to local communities. Surrounding counties are experiencing rapid population growth (nearly a 70% increase between 1990 and 2010).

- The CNF engaged the public early and often, which involved over 130 separate engagements, including: meetings with local/state/Federal agencies and elected officials; public open houses and workshops; and meetings with individuals and organizations. The CNF consulted with 13 federally recognized American Indian Tribes, and actively collaborated with several municipalities and local communities in ensuring issues of high public profile were addressed in the revised LRMP.
- The CNF released a draft LRMP and DEIS for public comment in December 2013. More than 1,700 comment letters were received, including: detailed comment letters from 53 organizations, 10 city/county/state/Federal agencies, and two Tribes.
- The final LRMP, updated in response to comments received:
  - Is designed to be flexible and adaptive, facilitating projects that reduce fire risk, restore watersheds and sustain local communities.
  - Provides for an ASQ of nearly 200,000 ccf (112,462 MBF) that represents an 11% increase from the current 1987 Plan. It also retains about 128,000 permitted head months for livestock grazing.
  - Emphasizes restoring the health of ecosystems; reducing the risk of uncharacteristic fire; retaining old growth forest components; sustaining habitat for at-risk species; restoring riparian areas and wetlands; improving conditions of watersheds; and improving ecosystem resiliency.
  - Provides for sustainable levels of tourism, recreation, and resource activities; and balance between developed & dispersed recreation opportunities and motorized & non-motorized access.
  - Recommends 3 new wilderness areas (8,733 acres). Ten existing wilderness areas (156,374 acres) and nine IRAs (50,571 acres) will be managed for their wilderness and roadless character.
- Key public concern areas are: wilderness recommendations, old growth and large trees management (particularly regarding implementation of 4-FRI), species viability protections, municipal water supply protections, open space protections; motorized access, livestock grazing, and smoke impacts.

#### **Next Steps:**

- The final LRMP will go into effect 30 days after the publication of the Notice of Availability of the FEIS in the Federal Register. As with previous 1982 Rule revised plans in Region 3 of the USDA Forest Service, the **post-decisional appeal process will be utilized.**