

# Coronado National Forest CER Supplementary Document to meet AMS Requirements

## Introduction

The Coronado National Forest (NF) plan revision process conforms to the 1982 Planning Rule provisions, including those for conducting an Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS). The AMS procedures require the Coronado NF to develop and/or verify benchmarks for setting the evaluation space for alternatives, analyze existing conditions and trends, make projections of future demand, and identify public issues and management concerns in order to determine the need to change current plan direction. The Coronado NF's previously released Comprehensive Evaluation Report (CER), developed prior to enjoyment of the 2008 planning rule, accomplished much of this objective. Language and concepts specific to the enjoined 2008 rule, such as Species of Concern/Species of Interest, that are found within the CER will not be carried forward into plan development and National Environmental Policy Act Environmental Impact Statement evaluation of the plan; however, concepts that still apply under the 1982 rule provisions, such as coarse filter/fine filter analyses, will be carried forward. Most of the material developed for the Coronado NF CER meets AMS requirements and there is no need to re-do or re-format that material. The additional information below supplements the CER to fully conform to the remainder of the AMS requirements. It, along with the CER document, provides the basis for revision of the existing forest plan.

## Benchmark Analysis

Benchmark analyses are one of the required components of the 1982 Planning Rule Procedures pertaining to the Analysis of Management Situation. Benchmark analyses define the range within which alternatives are to be developed and analyzed by identifying the maximums and minimums that each alternative should fall within. Selection of benchmarks depends primarily on the revision topics to be addressed during plan revision.

All Forests in the Southwestern Region developed benchmarks during development of their original plans. Benchmarks were established for timber resources, as well as for other resource areas such as livestock grazing, recreation, wildlife, wilderness, and other key resources. They were evaluated for their physical and biological production potential, and monetary benchmarks were run for those resources having an established market value.

During the need for change evaluation for revising the current forest plan, all benchmarks previously developed<sup>1</sup> were reviewed, validated, and found to still be appropriate and reasonable. The range of

---

<sup>1</sup> See Coronado National Forest existing plan: Coronado National Forest Plan, 1986, Page 7.

expected alternatives developed during revision should fall within the maximums and minimums established by the original benchmarks. No adjustments to existing benchmarks and no new benchmarks are needed at this time. If, in the process of alternative development, it is discovered that an alternative falls outside the range of an existing benchmark, then the affected benchmark will need to be re-evaluated and re-established as necessary.

## **Projections of Demand Summaries**

This is a summary of the projections of demand analysis required under the 219.12(e) (3) of the 1982 Planning Rule Provisions. Projected future demand for forest resource-use was estimated using existing, secondary data from federal, state, and forest-specific sources. Sources included US Census and USDA Agricultural Projection, state population projections and Department of Game and Fish data, and a variety of data sets specific to each National Forest. A full list of sources is available as bibliographic references at the end of the Coronado NF Recreation, Grazing, Minerals and Timber Demand report. Although statistical data and methods were used for some resources, such as recreation and grazing statistics, this analysis is primarily a qualitative description of possible future resource demands.

Demand for outdoor recreation is expected to grow indefinitely. As long as populations are increasing, so will the demand for recreation on the Coronado NF. Non-consumptive wildlife and developed recreation will grow the most, exceeding the Forest's ability to supply. Managers must either invest in new infrastructure or adopt regulations to control use at developed sites. Capacity of general forest areas and designated wilderness is expected experience slower demand growth during the next planning cycle. Therefore managers should focus their efforts on more popular activities requiring easy access and public services.

The share of total demand for grazing within the market area (as measured by cattle inventory) that could be supported by levels of permitted use on the Coronado NF has ranged from a high of 7.7 percent in 2001 to a low of 4.4 percent occurring in 2007. However, this does not consider effects on actual use due to factors such as drought, financial limitations on operators and market conditions. In addition, the supply of grazing is limited, and other resource considerations may limit grazing use in addition to these factors. While the share of total demand provided by the forest and grasslands is small, it may be more important for smaller areas within the market area. However, this trend is uncertain given the relatively short period examined.

The Coronado NF has abundant deposits of metallic minerals. The majority of interest is for copper, but no active mining currently exists. Likewise, there is potential growth in the demand for gold but no commercial mines are in operation. There is minimal extraction of construction related materials. Demand for construction related material is influenced by local construction industries and current economic conditions support minimal production. As markets rebound, Coronado NF managers may face an increase in the demand for construction related materials. The Forest's capacity is expected to allow for sustainable mining operations. There is currently a development proposal for copper mining under review, but no decision has been made. Additional proposals are likely to appear during the next planning cycle.

The comparison of timber inventory and demand presented here assumes that all supplies of timber in Arizona and New Mexico national forests are available for commercial timber harvest and ignores such factors as harvest economics, steep terrain, and resource quality. Under this baseline estimate, current annual demand represents only 0.05 to 0.15 percent of inventory in Arizona and 0.11 to 0.29 percent of inventory in New Mexico. Consequently, there appears to be sufficient timber inventory to sustain current consumption rates indefinitely assuming moderate rates of growth. Given the lack of availability information on net annual growth for the Coronado NF, a baseline comparison of inventory and demand cannot be made. Similarly, a lack of information on total timber demanded from primary wood processing facilities is unavailable given a lack of information on current consumption from these facilities. However, recent estimates of capacity suggest that area facilities have the capacity to accommodate existing removal. The change in forest service management focusing on removal of smaller size classes does not mean demand for these materials will follow. These materials may increase in demand with favorable market conditions, changes in energy markets and programs that incentivize industry development.

## **MIS**

Management Indicator Species (MIS) are species selected during the forest planning process because their population changes are believed to indicate the effects of management activities. MIS are also selected to allow evaluation of the differences between alternatives in the revised plan's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). There may be a need to change the MIS identified in the current plan to reflect changes in management direction made during plan revision during the evaluation of alternatives and, ultimately, within the revised Forest Plan. MIS selected for the final revised plan will be based on the proposed management in the selected alternative.

## **Review of Need for Change**

The need to change the existing Forest Plan and topics to address during revision identified in the previous CER document were re-evaluated in light of the above supplementary information. With the addition of the need to change MIS evaluation completed in this document, the needs for change previously identified remain valid. The topics identified to carry forward into revision also remain valid.