

Cibola National Forest Mountain Districts Plan Revision

**Inventory of Areas Potentially Suitable for
Wilderness**

Welcome!



Why are we here this evening?

We want to explain:

- the link between forest plan revision and wilderness
- the process for identifying and evaluating *potentially* suitable areas for wilderness
- the other types of designated areas
- how to use the collaborative mapping tool



Why have a Forest Plan?

- **Cities and Counties have land use plans**
 - so do national forests
- **Cities and counties may have residential areas, commercial areas, mixed-use areas, open space areas**
 - national forests **ALSO** have areas for different mixes of uses



National Forests are managed for Multiple Uses and Sustained Yield

Outdoor Recreation

Water

Livestock Use

Timber/Other Forest Products

Wilderness

Wildlife and Fish

Threatened and Endangered Species

Special Areas

Energy/Minerals

Experimental Forests

Research Natural Areas

Wild and Scenic Rivers



Why revise the existing 1985 Plan?

- **Conditions have changed, both on the Cibola and off**
 - **Draft Assessment Report released April 2014**
- **New planning rule and strategic direction for Forest Service land management**
 - **Science-based management**
 - **More public involvement and collaboration**



What has happened so far in plan revision?

November 2012 – **Plan Revision Kickoff**

8 public meetings, creation of a plan revision webpage and email inbox

May 2014 – **Assessment Release**

10 public meetings to discuss key findings

June - July 2014 – **Collaborative Work Sessions**

13 sessions to develop and refine needs for change to the current Forest Plan



What's coming – the Plan Development Phase

September 9 - November 21 – Wilderness Inventory
4 workshops and public contributions to the inventory maps

January - March 2015 – Wilderness Evaluation
workshops and public contributions to the evaluation maps

February 2015 – Draft Desired Conditions
workshops to develop and refine desired conditions for resources, goods, and services



Inventory of Potential Additions to Wilderness

Why? It is required as a part of the process for revising the Cibola Forest Plan



Federal Regulation: As part of the plan development process

Identify and evaluate lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System and determine whether to recommend any such lands for wilderness designation.



Wilderness Characteristics

- **Appears primarily affected by the forces of nature**
- **Outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive or unconfined type of recreation**
- **Presence of ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value**
- **Can be managed to preserve wilderness character**
 - **Of sufficient size, shape and configuration**
 - **Presence of non-federal land**
 - **Management of adjacent land**

Existing Wilderness areas of the Cibola National Forest Mountain Districts

- Sandia Mountain Wilderness
 - Manzano Mountain Wilderness
 - Apache Kid Wilderness
 - Withington Wilderness
-
- 138,378 acres or 8.5% of the Cibola National Forest



Process for Designating New Wilderness



Potentially Suitable Additions to Wilderness

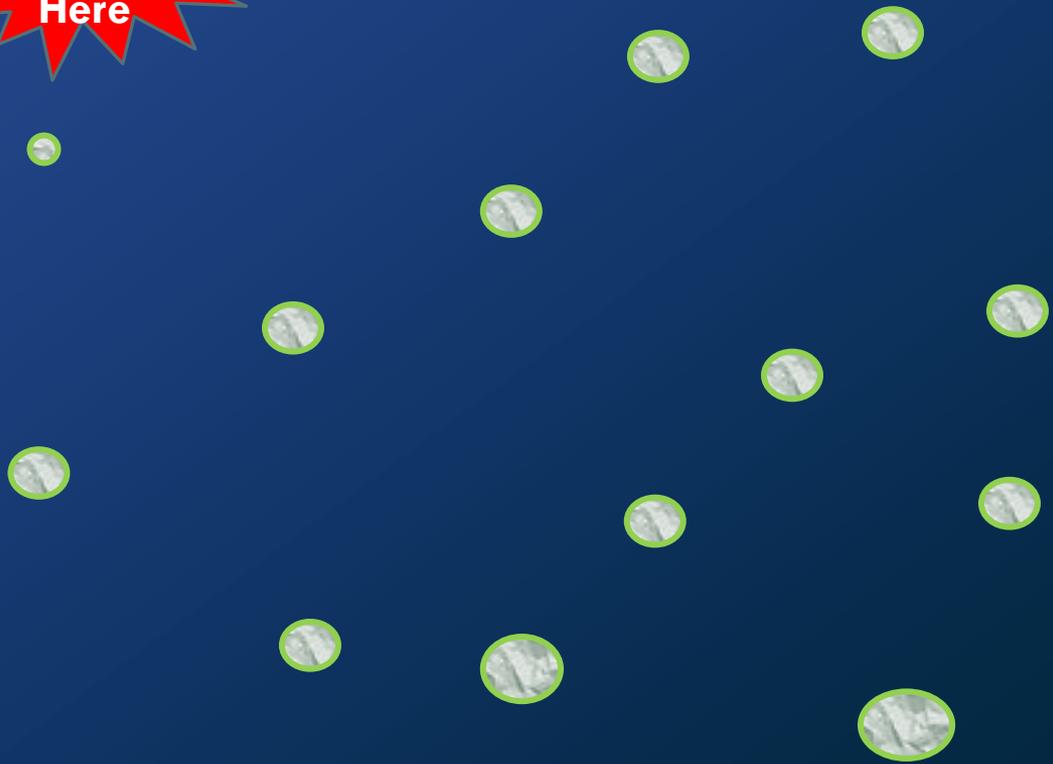
1. Inventory



2. Evaluate

3. Analyze

4. Recommend?



Potentially Suitable Additions to Wilderness

1. Inventory



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Potentially Suitable Additions to Wilderness

1. Inventory



2. Evaluate



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4. Recommend?



Potentially Suitable Additions to Wilderness

1. Inventory

We are
Here

2. Evaluate

3. Analyze

4. Determine which, *if any*, areas
to recommend for wilderness

- Consider DEIS Comments
- Objection Process

Inclusion in the inventory of potential additions to wilderness is not a designation that conveys or requires a particular kind of management.

- Proposed directive FS 1909.12, Version 02/14/2013



Inventory process – What to look for

Ideally:

- A large block of forest land without substantially noticeable human development.
- Trails OK (motorized included)
- Only administrative roads or no roads



Inventory process – Where to start?

- The inventory is broad and inclusive

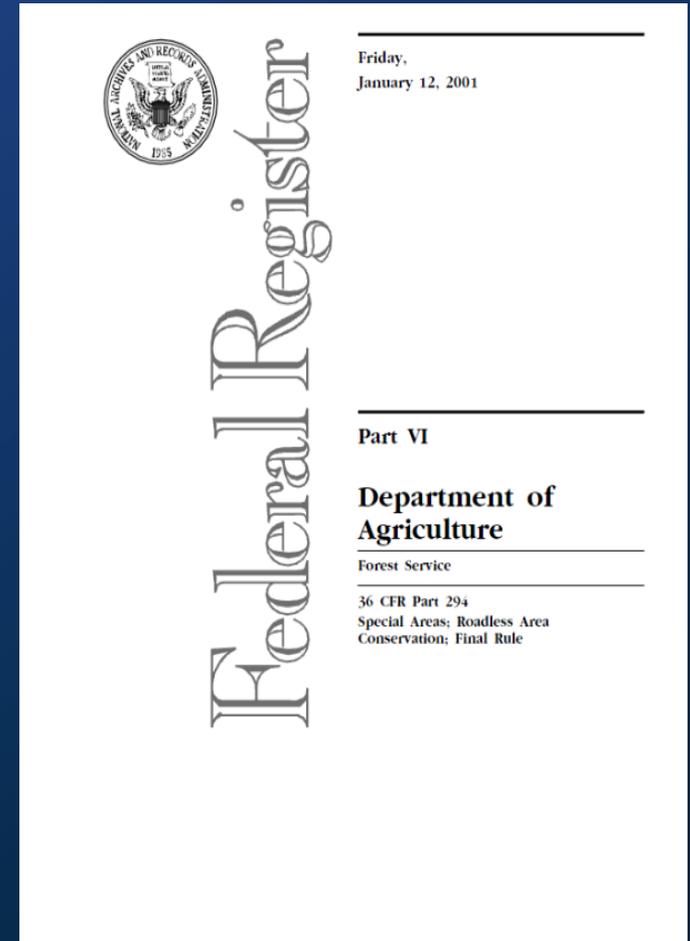
So, where do you start looking?

- Start with the assessment report, designated areas including Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs)
- Also –areas proposed by the public



What are Inventoried Roadless Areas?

- Established by Federal Regulation in early 2001, generally roadless areas.
- There are 13 IRAs on the Cibola National Forest, totaling over 239,000 acres.
 - Mt. Taylor RD \approx 33,000 ac.
 - Magdalena RD \approx 206,000 ac.
 - Sandia RD = 0 ac.
 - Mountainair RD = 0 ac.



Characteristics of IRAs

- Road construction & reconstruction not permitted in IRAs. Road maintenance is permitted.
- Timber cutting not permitted. However, there are exceptions; ecosystem restoration, improving T&E species' habitat, Christmas trees, firewood.
- Motorized equipment and transport (ATV/UTV, motorcycles on designated trails) are allowed.



Inventory Process – what to consider

Must meet one of the following:

- > 5,000 acres, or
- Contiguous to existing wilderness regardless of size, or
- < 5,000 acres, but big enough to preserve, use, manage in an unimpaired condition

Inventory Process – what not to consider

Roads mechanically maintained or identified for continued public use.

Areas with power lines with cleared rights of way

Pipelines and other permanently installed linear right-of-way structures

Areas with substantially noticeable timber harvest, veg treatments, mining activities, or range or vertical structures within

**What we have done to
jumpstart the inventory?**



STEP 1: Identify and inventory potentially suitable lands with wilderness characteristics using the following criteria:

- **Exclude inholdings, withdrawal lands**
- **Exclude utilities, developed recreation sites, rights-of-way, and areas with projects underway**
- **Exclude system roads and a 30-meter buffer on either side of centerline.**

Resulting coded polygons based on these criteria:

- **> 5,000 acres**
- **Adjacent to existing Wilderness**



STEP 2: Present draft inventory maps to the public via the Cibola's collaborative mapping tool and at collaborative workshops.

STEP 3: Receive public contributions of local knowledge, ideas

STEP 4: Forest Supervisor determines areas to carry forward to evaluation phase



For each area considered:

- Does it meet the size or adjacency criteria?
- Does it contain areas of roads to exclude?
- Does it contain areas of substantially noticeable treatments, improvements, developments? If so, exclude that portion of the area.
- Are there easements or rights-of-way to avoid? If so, exclude that portion of the area.
- Are there other areas with wilderness character of sufficient size that are practicable to manage as such?

What we debated:

Where do we draw the preliminary boundaries?

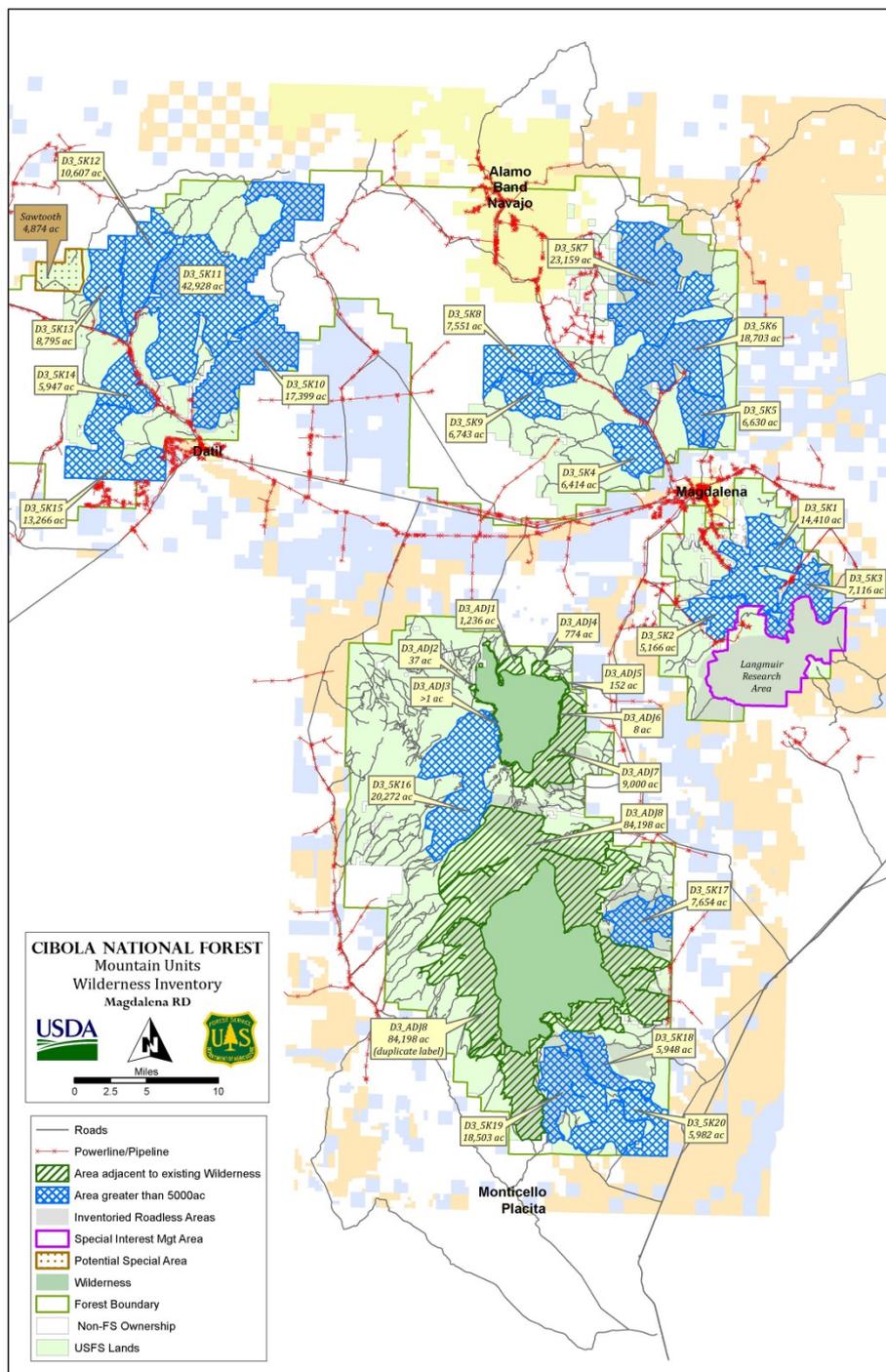
What do the words “substantially noticeable” mean?

What portion of an area do we exclude when there are non-wilderness character factors present?

What distance should the boundary back away from an excluded road?

How do we negotiate the “reasonably broad and inclusive” direction with what makes sense from a management perspective?

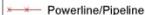




CIBOLA NATIONAL FOREST
 Mountain Units
 Wilderness Inventory
 Magdalena RD

USDA  U.S.

Miles
 0 2.5 5 10

-  Roads
-  Powerline/Pipeline
-  Area adjacent to existing Wilderness
-  Area greater than 5000ac
-  Inventory Roadless Areas
-  Special Interest Mgt Area
-  Potential Special Area
-  Wilderness
-  Forest Boundary
-  Non-FS Ownership
-  USFS Lands



Preliminary Inventory Results

34 stand-alone areas

| | | | |
|--------------|----|-----------|----|
| Mount Taylor | 12 | Magdalena | 20 |
| Mountainair | 2 | Sandia | 0 |

26 areas adjacent to existing wilderness or recommended wilderness study areas

| | | | |
|--------------|---|-----------|----|
| Mount Taylor | 0 | Magdalena | 8 |
| Mountainair | 8 | Sandia | 10 |

What happens to the inventory areas that aren't carried forward to evaluation?

If it's an IRA (Inventoried Roadless Area)

→ it stays an IRA, but may be considered for other special management in the revised plan.

If it's not an IRA

→ it continues under current management, but may be considered for other special management in the revised plan.



What we're asking you to contribute between now and November 21, 2014

Tell us:

- **if you would keep, modify, or eliminate an identified inventory area, referencing its code, or add a new one**
- **why....substantially noticeable timber harvest, veg treatments, mining activity, range or vertical structures within the area; authorized roads within that are not shown, or clearly has or does not have wilderness character.**

Other Types of Designated Areas Potential Research Natural Areas (RNAs)



Photo 3. Several blue spruces within the RNA are close to record size for the species. This one measured at 44.5 inches (107 cm) DBH.

Tell us if you would keep, modify, or eliminate an identified, potential RNA, referencing its code, or add a new one, and Why?

Other Types of Designated Areas

Special Areas

- outstanding examples of plant and animal communities, geological features, scenic grandeur, or other features that merit special management.
- emphasize recreational or other related values; other uses are permitted in harmony with the area's purpose.

Tell us:

- if you would keep, modify, or eliminate an identified, potential special area, referencing its code, or add a new one, and Why?



Public concerns with increasing the number of special designations

- **Less flexibility to actively manage the forest**
- **Less opportunity for active restoration of areas in need**
- **Less access to parts of the forest**
- **Land will be taken out of the timber base**
- **Designating areas on a map may lead to unintended impacts to the area**
- **There is already either plan direction, law, regulation, or policy to address rare plants, rare animals, and many other unique resources**

Public concerns with *not* designating additional special areas

- **Loss of rare habitats, rare plants, or rare wildlife species**
- **Core interior forest will be fragmented by management**
- **Tree cutting will degrade unique areas**
- **Areas of scenic beauty will be compromised**
- **Cultural or historical resources will be compromised**

Key Messages

- **First, broad cut for wilderness inventory**
- **Many opportunities to provide comments/ideas**
- **More in-depth discussions during evaluation phase**
- **This is not a voting process**
- **Each viewpoint considered equally**
- **Substantive comments are most helpful**

- **Use of the web-based collaborative mapping tool to contribute your input is encouraged**
 - **Potential wilderness Inventory**
 - **Potential RNAs**
 - **Potential special areas**

