Wilderness Workshop Session
March 1 & 2, 2011

All Designated Wilderness Areas (excerpted from draft revised Forest Plan, pp 99-111)

General Description for All Designated Wilderness Areas

There are 10 existing wilderness areas on the Coconino National Forest. This plan provides direction for 8 of them. Direction for the Kendrick and Mazatzal Wilderness areas is provided in the Kaibab and Tonto National Forests' plans, respectively. The Coconino NF's plan contains direction for the Sycamore

Note for public review: The Coconino National Forest will be creating a draft of Wilderness Opportunity Spectrum for the Draft Plan and EIS. If you would like to comment on how the settings below apply to an existing wilderness area that you are familiar with, please send those to the Plan Revision Team during this comment period:

- Pristine- The area is characterized as an extensive, unmodified, natural environment. Natural processes and conditions have not been measurably affected by the actions of users. The area will be managed as free as possible from the influences of human activity. Terrain and vegetation allow extensive and challenging cross-country travel.
- Primitive - The area is characterized by an essentially unmodified, natural environment. Concentrations of Visitors are low and evidence of human use is minimal. The area has high opportunity for isolation, solitude, exploration, risk, and challenge.
- Semi-primitive – The area is characterized by a predominantly unmodified environment of at least moderate size. System trails and campsites are present and there is evidence of other uses. A minimum of on-site controls and restrictions are implemented to protect physical, biological, and social resources. Some facilities may be present to reduce visitor impact.
- Transition - The area is characterized by a predominantly unmodified environment; however, the concentrations of visitors may be moderate to high at various times. The area is characterized as having a large number of day users who are often mixed with overnight and long-distance travelers on trails near trailheads and wilderness boundaries.

Wilderness which also lies within the Prescott and Kaibab National Forests.

Desired Conditions for All Designated Wilderness Areas

Wilderness and recommended wilderness areas provide their full range of social and ecological benefits.

Wilderness Recreation

Trail and trailhead development emphasizes wilderness recreation and watershed condition while maintaining wilderness resource values. Key wilderness trailheads provide sanitation, orientation, and interpretation to wilderness visitors. Directional guidance and information on minimum impact and archaeological site etiquette is provided at wilderness access points. Loop hikes are expanded in wilderness to encourage low-impact day use, where possible. Wilderness-dependent recreation

opportunities such as backpacking, horse packing and hunter guiding are ongoing where these activities are consistent with resource and opportunity setting objectives.

New structural improvements necessary for proper management and/or protection of the wilderness resource are rare. High-traffic roadside facilities that provide a gateway to wilderness areas or vistas of wilderness inform and educate visitors about wilderness.

Permanent damage to the resource is limited by distributing visitor use in wilderness by permit system or other methods where such damage is evident. Existing signs and facilities are maintained where public safety and resource protection require it.

Places within existing wilderness that have inconsistencies with the wildernesses primitive character, such as at Bell Rock, West Fork, Boynton Canyon, Kachina Peaks and some places near private land retain wilderness values to the extent possible. Infrastructure in these places are more developed and signs and carrins may be more frequent than normally associated with wilderness management in order to protect visitor experience and resources. In areas where the desired condition is a Pristine or Primitive wilderness opportunity, these types of developments do not exist.

Special use permits issued in wilderness provided for activities that facilitate the protection of wilderness character. These permitted activities do not interfere with the challenging and self-reliant recreation of other wilderness visitors and do not cause widespread impacts to wilderness character.

Wilderness Education

Educational material and information is provided at all wilderness trailhead access points including information about the variety of trails and experiences available in nearby wilderness areas and information about personal safety, leave-no-trace etiquette, and pertinent regulations. Educational materials encourage widespread understanding of the philosophy of wilderness and support for its natural and social benefits. They also provide information to help users be prepared with appropriate equipment and information. Visitors learn about sensitive ecological features, know their responsibility, and act in a way that protects ecological systems.

Ecological Management of Wilderness Areas

Ecosystems within wilderness are functioning within their historic range of variability. Ecological conditions trend towards the desired conditions for the respective vegetation types within each wilderness. Disturbances, including fire and flooding, are able to play their natural role in vegetative succession, while accounting for public health and safety concerns. (See the appropriate Vegetation Types and Forestwide Ecological Direction for more information). Ecological conditions trend towards the desired conditions for the respective ecological resource within each wilderness. Invasive exotic plants and animals do not occur at levels that disrupt ecological functioning. Plants used for traditional medicine and cultural purposes thrive here.

Objectives for All Designated Wilderness Areas

Rehabilitate to natural conditions at least XX damaged wilderness campsite(s) every XX years.

Standards for All Designated Wilderness Areas

In wilderness, group size limit is 12 persons and livestock (combined) per group.

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Generally, do not permit commercial activity in wilderness areas, unless the activity is wilderness-dependent and the activity cannot be conducted/replicated outside of wilderness. This would include activities by organizational groups and/or training classes.

Guidelines for All Designated Wilderness Areas

Large group activities (75 or more people), such as races and social gatherings, should not occur in wilderness unless they are specifically for the purpose of wilderness-based education and are designed to protect wilderness resources.

Signing in wilderness should be limited to those that are essential for resource protection and user safety.

Signing and parking for wilderness access should concentrate parking in designated locations. Casual wilderness use resulting from roadside parking along the highway should be discouraged. Damaged parking sites should be restored using erosion control and revegetation.

Management Approaches for All Designated Wilderness Areas

Implement corrective measures such as a wilderness permit system if overuse causes unacceptable resource damage. Overuse can be determined from: Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) studies, range analyses, Code-a-site inventories, and professional judgment. The Kachina Peaks, Red Rock-Secret Mountain, Wet Beaver, West Clear Creek, and Sycamore Canyon Wilderness areas are closely monitored to determine whether or not corrective measures are needed.

Discourage bicycles in wilderness through such methods as ranger patrols, placement of bike racks near wilderness boundaries or portals, ``wilderness ahead'' signs located outside of the wilderness, improved trail design, and expanded trail opportunities outside of the wilderness.

Provide regular wilderness ranger patrol in wilderness areas to the degree necessary to meet the standards for each area. If funding is limited, use volunteers to accomplish as much of this work as possible via the Wilderness Information Specialist (WIS)program. Standard level trail maintenance is defined in the implementation schedules for each wilderness.

Expand partnerships such as the resort Wilderness Ranger Program to increase awareness of wilderness values and etiquette. Increase residents' awareness of the wilderness near them by providing them with information about wilderness. Use volunteers as much as possible, particularly during peak season to patrol, pick up litter, break up fire rings, restore damaged sites, contact the public, and maintain trail condition logs.

Coordinate law enforcement activities with wilderness managers to ensure that any evidence of illegal activities that negatively impacts wilderness character is removed.

Develop wilderness management direction that establishes Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) for all wilderness areas.

Management plans may be developed and implemented for all wilderness areas on the Forest.

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Fossil Springs Wilderness

General Description for Fossil Springs Wilderness

Sixty miles south of Flagstaff, the Fossil Springs Wilderness encompasses a steep, wide canyon approximately 1,600 feet down at the edge of the Colorado Plateau. Generally, the vegetation types are piñon-juniper evergreen shrub, riparian, and ponderosa pine; however, there are inclusions of other types due to the topographic and ecological complexity of the area. This wilderness is one of the most diverse areas in the State likely due to the range of plant communities compressed into a small area that ranges from very wet to very dry. The creek is situated in a region dominated by Quaternary basalt laid down over the Supai Formation. The springs are located on the southern side of the Wilderness, but are not within the Wilderness. The stream is subject to chemical mineral deposits called travertine. These deposits along with the unique stream chemistry interact with the riparian vegetation and other geological features to produce an unusual environment that is only one of two in Arizona. (See the direction for the Fossil Springs Botanical Area and Wild and Scenic River for more discussion of the springs.) Fossil Creek has a Wild and a Recreational River Segment within the wilderness. (See the direction for Wild and Scenic Rivers and the Corridor Management Plan for more information.)

Fossil Creek is a very important place for the Apache. There are many stories and traditions about the canyon and the role it has played through time as a sanctuary for the Apache people. In the 1870's, most Apache were forcibly relocated to the San Carlos Reservation, although some families managed to hide out and survive in the canyon. With the need for labor to construct the Childs-Irving hydroelectric power plant system, Apache returned to the canyon to help build that historic project and maintain it for over 40 years until they were forced to leave and relocate in the Yavapai-Apache reservations by Camp Verde, Middle Verde, and Clarkdale.

The desired conditions for this area are in addition to those described for the Verde Valley Landscape Character Zone.

Desired Conditions for Fossil Springs Wilderness

The area retains its integrity as an outstandingly clean, pristine site. It has primitive hiking trails and is a good place to find solitude. There are recreation opportunities for big and small game hunters, wildlife viewing, hikers, backpackers, fishermen, swimmers and kayakers.

The steep canyon topography has terraces which provide for a greater diversity of plants and habitat conditions. The vegetation types for this wilderness include piñon-juniper evergreen shrub, mixed broadleaf deciduous riparian and ponderosa pine (see Vegetation Type Desired Conditions for more information). Within these vegetation types there are numerous and diverse inclusions of communities of plants such as mesquite, catclaw acacia, crucifixion thorn, cacti, ash, walnut, alder, cottonwood, sycamore, hackberry, willow, chokecherry, boxelder, piñon pine, several juniper species, with ponderosa pine dominating the higher plateaus with numerous annual and perennial woody and non woody plants. A variety of age classes of riparian trees are present, successfully regenerating, and some trees are very large (exceeding 30 inches in diameter). Native shrubby and herbaceous vegetation is also successfully regenerating and provide food and cover for wildlife consistent with the capacity of the area. This vegetative diversity creates many wildlife niches for deer, javelina, and large number of bird species. Occupied black hawk nesting sites are protected from disturbance during the breeding season.

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Fossil Creek is an important isolated refuge for black hawks, lowland leopard frogs, native fish and macro-invertebrates. Non-native fish or other non-native aquatic species are not present in the channel or in livestock developments within the Fossil Creek-Verde River 5th level HUC.

Hydrologic and geologic features of the stream are preserved, especially the travertine system. Water quality is outstanding and the river to at times appears blue because of the water chemistry. Turbidity is low except during flood events, and E. coli levels are low. The exposure above the springs of a scarp of the Colorado Plateau, eroded on Late Paleozoic sedimentary rocks and now buried under extensive Tertiary basalt lava flows, is preserved in pristine geological condition. In the uplands, the landscape is dry and open with a very rocky texture and semi-arid vegetation.

The Mail Trail, once used for horseback mail deliver, and the Flume Trail tie to the history of hydropower and industry in the vicinity. Fossil Creek is notable for its high archaeological site density and diversity in a unique microcosm in the Mogollon Rim. It is also one of the more important locales of historic and modern Apache occupation. Its various site types that occur in the different environmental zones in and around the Creek reflect specialized subsistence and settlement strategies to maximize the specific resources of those zones. In this respect, there is also similarity in the ways the prehistoric Sinagua and historic Apache utilized this environment. Habitations and riparian-oriented agriculture were the main uses of the canyon bottom and virtually every flat location along the creek shows evidence of habitation by both Sinagua and Apache. The hill slopes along the creek were areas extensively utilized for the collecting and gathering of wild plant foods such as yucca, agave, and prickly pear, cooked in large communal roasting pits. Small pockets of soil that collected in hillsides formed small areas in which corn could be grown, as evidenced by numerous small prehistoric field houses as well as remains of Apache houses in their vicinity.

Kachina Peaks Wilderness

General Description for Kachina Peaks Wilderness

Located just north of Flagstaff, the Kachina Peaks Wilderness is part of a large, heavily vegetated composite volcano 7,400 to 12,633 feet high, including Humphreys Peak, the highest point in Arizona. The San Francisco Peaks exhibits a rich diversity of past geologic events such as lava flows, volcanic eruptions, glaciation, and erosion. The San Francisco Peaks are an outstanding example of past volcanic activity and preserves the best example of Ice Age glaciation in Arizona in lateral and medial moraines and former streambeds.

The only alpine tundra vegetation in Arizona is found on the San Francisco Peaks. This area is less than 1,000 acres and contains a threatened plant, *Packera franciscanus*, (San Francisco Peaks groundsel) as well as other endemic species. Wildlife species include mule deer, elk, turkey, black bear, coyote, mountain lion, red squirrel, and Clark's nutcracker. The San Francisco Peaks contain virgin spruce-fir forest and the only area of bristlecone pine on the Coconino NF. The San Francisco Peaks are sacred to a number of southwestern tribes, most notably the Hopi and Navajo, but also the Yavapai, Walapai, Havasupai, Apache, Zuni, and Acoma (See San Francisco Peaks Landscape Character Zone).

This wilderness contains the San Francisco Peaks Research Natural Area, which provides a control or reference for an alpine tundra ecosystem at the southern extend of this ecosystems range.

For Scenery Desired Conditions, see the San Francisco Peaks Landscape Character Zone.

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Desired Conditions for Kachina Peaks Wilderness

There is a diverse composition of wildlife species and native vegetation. In this high elevation wilderness, there are alpine tundra, mixed conifer with aspen, and spruce-fir forests with subalpine grasslands and ponderosa pine interspersed (see Vegetation Type Desired Conditions for more information). The ecosystem diversity of the wilderness and ecological attributes and processes that allows it to provide watershed values, habitat for native biota, panoramic vistas, and/or solitude are maintained. Recreation use, ecological attributes, and tribal values maintain the uniqueness of the vegetation.

The alpine ecosystem provides habitat for San Francisco Peaks groundsel, is able to support and sustain rare or endemic species, and continues to be resilient to natural and human-caused impacts.

Several roads, jeep trails, and hiking/equestrian trails provide access to the wilderness boundary. Recreational opportunities include day hiking, backpacking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, winter camping, snow and ice climbing, small and big game hunting, bird watching, and leaf watching (fall). The top of the Kachina Peaks Wilderness provides outstanding views of the Painted Desert, the North Rim of Grand Canyon, and Sunset Crater. Trails to the top of Peaks within the wilderness are higher traffic than is typical of more remote wilderness. These trails have a stable narrow width and discourage traveling off-trail. Particularly in areas of alpine tundra vegetation, off-trail travel does not occur. The mountain maintains attributes that provide historic and cultural values, such as shrines.

Standards for Kachina Peaks Wilderness

Off-trail travel is prohibited except when there is enough snowpack to protect underlying vegetation, particularly in the alpine tundra vegetation type.

Munds Mountain Wilderness

General Description for Munds Mountain Wilderness

Elevations in the Munds Mountain Wilderness range from 3,600 to 6,800 feet. Located east of Sedona, the area is characterized by the moderate to steep slopes of the Mogollon Rim. Rattlesnake, Woods, and Upper Jacks Canyon are the major drainages. Munds Mountain, Lee Mountain, and Horse Mesa are the areas of highest elevation.

Munds and Lee Mountains are unique geologic areas of the Mogollon Rim. There are extensive outcroppings of Coconino and Supai sandstone on the cliff faces of Munds and Lee Mountains and ramp basalt flows.

The desired conditions for this area are in addition to those described for the Red Rock and Ponderosa Pine Landscape Character Zones.

Desired Conditions for Munds Mountain Wilderness

A great diversity of vegetation and wildlife species and outstanding riparian habitat characterize this wilderness. Depending upon slope and aspect, several vegetation communities are found, including ponderosa pine, piñon-juniper evergreen shrub, interior chaparral, and mixed broadleaf deciduous riparian. There is a small portion of semi-desert grasslands. Riparian vegetation and perennial water sources are found in the major drainages (see Vegetation Type Desired Conditions for more information). Arizona cypress communities are preserved.

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The deep drainages and rugged nature of the terrain offer many opportunities for primitive and unconfined activities including hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, swimming, rock climbing, bird watching, and hunting. The terrain provides many challenging recreation opportunities in areas with few trails. Due to the striking beauty of the red cliffs and riparian habitat, the wilderness also offers outstanding opportunities for photography and painting. In order to identify trail locations, cairns (trail markers made of stacked rocks) may be found along trails. At Bell Rock, visitors have an awareness of, and sensitivity to, the Munds Mountain Wilderness.

Prehistoric site occur in many different locales within the wilderness and reflect hunting activities as early as 9,000 years ago, as well as agricultural settlements by the Sinagua 900 years ago. Although there are no interpreted sites in the wilderness, it contains a great variety of Sinagua sites types, including small field houses, substantial habitation pueblos, so-called "forts", field systems, and petroglyphs. Later activity by Yavapai and Apache are also present in rock shelters and caves as well as sites in the open. Many reflect long-term harvesting and cooking of agave in communal roasting pits. The historic Chaves Road skirts the south edge of the wilderness and provides a taste of what it was like to travel across this rugged area during pioneer times.

Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness

General Description for Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness

Located twenty miles south of Flagstaff, the Red Rock-Secret Mountain Wilderness includes spectacular red, tan, and buff cliffs that mark the edge of the Colorado Plateau. The country plunges as much as 2,500 feet into canyons that drain into Oak Creek and the Verde River. Secret Mountain and Wilson Mountain are high mesas jutting out into the lower country. Several lava flows cap the high rims of Tertiary, Triassic, Permian, Pennsylvanian, and Mississippian exposures. The area includes the dramatic backdrops and scenic cliffs that make Sedona a popular tourist spot.

This is an area of great climatic variation. The high rims are cool and moist most of the year, except for May and June. The south end of the wilderness, near Sedona, has a much warmer climate. Mid-winter temperatures average above freezing. The West Fork of Oak Creek Research Natural Area (RNA), a diverse vegetation community, is in the wilderness. (See the West Fork of Oak Creek RNA direction for more information.

The Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness was most heavily occupied in prehistoric times by the Southern Sinagua during the A.D. 1150 to 1300 period. Cliff dwellings are the most notable site types, forming single family homes as well as storage facilities for crops grown on the mesa tops and canyon bottoms. The most impressive sites are on the edge of the wilderness, the cliff dwellings of Honanki and Palatki, both of which have outstanding examples of prehistoric pictographs that span the entire range of human occupation of the Verde Valley. Both sites are developed for public visitation.

The desired conditions for this area are in addition to those described for the Red Rock and Ponderosa Pine Landscape Character Zones.

Desired Conditions for Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness

There are seven major plant communities: ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, interior chaparral, piñon-juniper evergreen shrub, riparian, and semi-desert grassland (see Vegetation Type Desired Conditions for

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more information). Arizona cypress communities are preserved. The wide variety of vegetative types provide habitat for equally diverse wildlife populations.

Native fish populations in the West Fork of Oak Creek persist and are minimally affected by invasive exotic aquatic species. Cliffs that are occupied peregrine falcon habitat are undisturbed. Invasive exotic plants do not occur at levels that disrupt ecological functioning. Plants used for ethnobotanical[1] purposes thrive here.

Heritage sites remain unaltered. Spectacular red, tan, and buff cliffs that mark the edge of the Colorado Plateau are found throughout this wilderness. Steep forest canyons interspersed with red rock arches and formation provide outstanding opportunities for solitude farther into the area. Visitor encounters are higher at the eastern end of the West Fork of Oak Creek. Opportunities for primitive recreation are many. Primitive hiking is allowed, but overnight camping may be restricted because of the overlying research natural area and resource protection. The Wilson Mountain National Recreation Trail provides an outstanding scenic hike within the wilderness. In order to provide for safety, cairns may be found along trails.

Strawberry Crater Wilderness

General Description for Strawberry Crater Wilderness

Located 30 minutes north and east of Flagstaff, the Strawberry Crater Wilderness is gently rolling piñon-juniper, cinder terrain, and lava fields about 5,500 to 6,000 feet in elevation. Strawberry Crater is part of the San Francisco Peaks volcanic field, which contains some 600 craters and cones. Strawberry Crater itself is about 50,000 to 100,000 years old. In appearance it is quite different from the younger, rounded cinder cone nearby. The Crater was formed by slow moving basaltic andesite. The ridges of the central Crater show the distinct layering that occurred during eruption. The ridges are broken at right angles to the ground and to one another. The jagged features and deep rust color of Strawberry Crater make it unique among local cinder cones. The area contains the Southwestern Region Sensitive plant species *Penstemon clutei*.

Strawberry Crater Wilderness shows evidence of occupation by the northern Sinagua who probably took advantage of a unique geological setting that exists nowhere else in the territory they occupied in prehistoric times. Strawberry Crater is also an important place to the Hopi and Navajo.

Because of the relatively open terrain and easy access from major roads, motor vehicle intrusion into the wilderness is an issue.

The desired conditions for this area are in addition to those described for the Volcanic Woodlands Landscape Character Zones.

Desired Conditions for Strawberry Crater Wilderness

The Strawberry Crater Wilderness offers the visitor an opportunity to experience the sense of time and endless horizon presented by piñon-juniper zones. The area also contains transitional areas to the ponderosa pine and the Great Basin grasslands vegetation types (See Vegetation Type Desired Conditions for more information). Strawberry Crater Wilderness shows little evidence of human visitation and

[1] Define ethnobotanical and should this be a forestwide condition?

vegetation on its slopes is preserved. From the low cinder cones, there are high quality scenic views of the Painted Desert, the Hopi mesas, and the buttes of the Little Colorado River valley. On the horizon, the San Francisco Peaks and Sunset Crater, add another dimension to the view. The area is strewn with cinders and evidence of the prehistoric volcanic activity that formed the area. The lava field to the north is a sea of black in the piñon juniper landscape.

The area offers opportunities for day hiking, backpacking, and camping. The area provides ample opportunity for self-reliance and challenging navigation in a flat, densely vegetated area. Petrified bubbles of once boiling stone look as fresh as the sparse vegetation that struggles for a foothold on this rugged moonscape. There are a few game animals and small mammals throughout. Opportunities for solitude and for exploring interesting geological and archaeological features exist.

The construction of barriers and signing along the wilderness boundary prevent motor vehicle intrusion along the south and west boundaries of the wilderness. Educational materials about the sensitive soils and plants are provided to visitors.

West Clear Creek Wilderness

General Description for West Clear Creek Wilderness

Located 10 miles east of Camp Verde, West Clear Creek is one of the most rugged, remote canyons in northern Arizona. The canyon forms where Willow Valley and Clover Creek join near two access trails; the Maxwell Trail and the Tramway Trail. The canyon continues westward for approximately 27 miles, measured along the creek, ending near Bull Pen Ranch. The creek continues westward to join the Verde River south of Camp Verde. The canyon is very narrow for most of its length, with many side canyons.

West Clear Creek Canyon is the longest of the canyons cutting through the Mogollon Rim, the edge of the Colorado Plateau. The formations visible in the canyon area are, from bottom to top, Late Paleozoic sedimentary rocks (Supai, Coconino, Kaibab), Tertiary sediments, and Tertiary basalt lava flows.

The desired conditions for this area are in addition to those described for the Verde Valley and Ponderosa Pine Landscape Character Zones.

Desired Conditions for West Clear Creek Wilderness

Major vegetation types in this wilderness are piñon-juniper evergreen shrub and ponderosa pine. The riparian and semi-desert and montane grassland components add to the diversity of the canyon ecosystem (See Vegetation Types Desired Conditions for more information). The terrain is rugged and provides for a variety of wildlife habitat. Hanging gardens on the upper slopes are undisturbed (See Riparian Vegetation for further direction on springs and seeps). Heritage sites remain undisturbed.

The canyon does contain some evidence of human use but the apparent naturalness of the area is unaffected. In spite of the short distance from the northern to the southern boundary, the area offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation by virtue of the very steep canyon walls. Access from Bull Pen Ranch to Bald Hill is fairly easy, even for inexperienced hikers or for fishermen. There are short steep access trails that are unmaintained from the rim to the canyon bottom. In the main, narrow part of the canyon, there are no trails. Deep long pools make it necessary to wade or swim in many places when hiking from one end of the canyon to the other so that even the most seasoned hiker

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will find lots of challenge. The canyon is wild and primitive. Interpretive materials associated with this wilderness advise that users need to plan trips carefully and self-reliance is emphasized.

Wet Beaver Wilderness

General Description for Wet Beaver Wilderness

Forty miles south of Flagstaff, the Wet Beaver Wilderness commences at its eastern border at the confluence of Brady and Jacks Canyons. Moving west, the boundary follows the canyon rim. In the lower reaches of the canyon, the boundary moves back slightly from the rim to include some of the adjacent plateau. The area ends where Wet Beaver Creek canyon opens towards the Verde Valley. Wet Beaver is a steep walled canyon cutting into the rim of the Colorado Plateau. Supai sandstone and shale form striking red cliffs along the lower canyon.

Like the West Clear Creek Wilderness, prehistoric sites occur in almost all types of topographic situations along Wet Beaver Creek and reflect an adaptation to the unique canyon environment. Petroglyphs can be seen along the Bell Trail that begins at the mouth of Wet Beaver Creek. Just outside the north edge of the wilderness is the ancient Palatkwabi Trail. It is likely that a side trail from it entered the Verde Valley and was a major trade connection between the southern Sinagua of the Verde Valley and the early Hopi pueblos along the Little Colorado River and the Hopi mesas.

The desired conditions for this area are in addition to those described for the Verde Valley and Ponderosa Pine Landscape Character Zones.

Desired Conditions for Wet Beaver Wilderness

The major vegetation type in this wilderness is piñon-juniper evergreen shrub, and the additional types of ponderosa pine, riparian and semi-desert grassland add to the diversity of the canyon ecosystem (See Vegetation Types Desired Conditions for more information). Wet Beaver Wilderness provides recreation opportunities for waterplay, wildlife-viewing, camping, and hiking while protecting the pristine riparian and aquatic resources. The perennial desert stream passes through a canyon of Supai sandstone, shale, and red rock. As visitors move eastward in the canyon, opportunities for solitude increase. Heritage sites remain undisturbed.

Sycamore Canyon Wilderness

General Description for Sycamore Canyon Wilderness

Sycamore Canyon Wilderness is on the Coconino, Kaibab, and Prescott National Forests. The direction in the Coconino NF Plan provides direction for this wilderness area on all three national forests.

The southern portion of the area is a series of broad mesas with gently sloping drainages tributary to the Verde River. Along the Verde River, there is extensive riparian habitat. The northern section is a series of foothills and canyons that rise to a 300-foot rim of rugged sandstone outcrops along Sycamore Canyon. Elevation ranges from 3,700 to 6,500 feet. These differences in elevation and aspect throughout the canyon result in a variety of contrasting ecological associations, set in spectacular "red rock" geologic formations.

Sycamore Canyon has long been noted for its cliff dwellings as well as tall tales of lost Spanish gold mines and Mexican treasure hunters ambushed by Apaches. Prehistoric textiles found in one site in the

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1930's show that cotton was once grown in areas like Sycamore Canyon, and that the Sinagua produced some of the most sophisticated and complex weaving technologies in the Southwest. Finely-woven, highly decorated cotton textiles were undoubtedly one of the more important products the Sinagua traded to the northern pueblos along the Palatkwabi Trail.

The desired conditions for this area are in addition to those described for the Verde Valley, Red Rock and Ponderosa Pine Landscape Character Zones.

Desired Conditions for Sycamore Canyon Wilderness

The canyon walls represent a diversity of geological history such as red sandstone, white limestone, and brown lava. Vegetation in the canyon varies from mixed conifer with aspen, ponderosa pine, and montane and semi-desert grasslands in the upper reaches to interior chaparral, piñon-juniper evergreen shrub and woodland, semi-desert grasslands and desert communities in the lower portions. The stream course is a mixed-broadleaf deciduous riparian vegetative type (See Vegetation Type Desired Conditions for more information). Along Sycamore Creek, the sycamore component is maintained as a higher proportion of the species composition than is seen in other mixed broad leaf deciduous vegetation type. Visitors experience solitude and challenge in this diverse canyon and enjoy high quality views of red rock country. Heritage sites remain undisturbed. Sycamore Canyon Wilderness is a Class I Airshed (See Air quality section). Noxious weeds such as tamarisk are absent from the creek and associated springs.

Recommended Wilderness

General Description for Recommended Wilderness

The proposed action includes three recommended wilderness areas that if selected in the Final Plan would use the interim direction below while waiting for Congressional action. (See map XX).

Desired Conditions for Recommended Wilderness

The primitive and undeveloped characteristics of recommended wilderness are maintained or enhanced. Scenery and wilderness recreation opportunities are emphasized over developments and mechanized forms of recreation. Mechanized recreation within the area does not detract from wilderness values. Motorized vehicle use is reduced. Archaeological sites remain undisturbed.

Objectives

Develop and implement management plans for any newly designated wilderness areas by XX years after designation occurs.

Guidelines for Recommended Wilderness

Existing facilities should be maintained but not expanded pending action by Congress.

Recreation facilities should be designed and rehabilitated in accordance with the Minimum Requirement Decision Process criteria.

Use of motorized vehicles should be limited to administrative and permitted use.

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