Cibola Forest Plan Revision
Community Meeting
Corona Village Hall
November 13, 2012 – 6:00 – 8:15 pm

Discussion Highlights

Facilitation/Notes: Lucy Moore

Welcome and Introductions:
Forest Service District Ranger Karen Lessard welcomed the group and explained the purpose of the meeting. FS staff Michael Carpinelli and Sarah Beck offered a power point presentation describing the plan revision process and invited comments on a variety of issues.

Discussion:

Desired condition: There were questions about the definition of "desired condition," and the suggestion that it could be summed up in one word: "rain!" Michael explained that the term referred to a landscape or mosaic that balances different interests -- vegetation types, wildlife, socio-economic and cultural needs, etc. The desired condition usually approximates the condition that existed 150-200 years ago. Participants asked about the objectives, standards and amendments that might be used to enable the FS to achieve this desired condition, and whether or not new data and science could be incorporated into the vision for the future and how to get there.

Road use: Participants spoke of the need to enforce prohibited road use. Too many people -- often firewood gatherers -- are driving off road, damaging the fragile landscape, in some places creating 8-10 inch ruts. They asked for strict enforcement based on the Travel Management Plan revision.

Mining claims: Participants told the FS staff about mining claims for rare earth elements that were filed recently. Staff explained the 1872 Mining Act gives extraction rights to the subsurface owner. The FS cannot deny access or impair the mining activities, but they can negotiate road locations and other elements in the operating plan with the company and other agencies that have authority. In addition, an Environmental Assessment must be done on the proposed actions. Certain areas can be withdrawn from mining, like a campground site.

Prioritizing future improvements: There were concerns that there would not be funding for needed improvements and development of FS resources. The decommissioning of roads was a sign, they feared, that FS services would be cut back further. What impact, asked a participant, would the budget have on decisions about FS activities and projects? Would funding limit the implementation of the desired condition? FS staff acknowledged that budget constraints would determine how much work could be done each year, but that by taking a long term view the agency can move closer each year toward the desired condition.

Assessment: There was discussion about the assessment activities and a review of the list of 15 areas the agency will be gathering data on. They will identify data gaps and hope that community members and other forest users can help contribute to filling those gaps. This is why public involvement is so important as the revision process moves forward.

Public involvement: Those present expressed concern with the FS communication efforts in the past, and asked for a change that would result in more participation by community members and interest groups. They cited the closure of the Cement Springs road, the only route to a popular recreation spot, as an example. Most in Corona were shocked to learn that the road had been closed by the FS. Although the FS staff had sent notices to the Mayor and others on their mailing list and held meetings, they felt that the FS notices and letters in general are "pretty vague," and that the reader "doesn't understand what's really at stake." "Knowledge is power," said a participant, emphasizing the importance of outreach. Understanding that the District Ranger and others are doing the best they can with limited time and resources, they asked for more specificity in communications and broader outreach, particularly about the implications of the proposed action.

The group wanted FS staff to understand that Corona, Mountainair, and other surrounding communities are "each a different world." What might work in one area would not in another.

There were suggestions for improved communications with the Corona community:

- Send notices/letters/meeting announcements/surveys, etc. to all Village Council members, not just the Mayor
- FS staff can attend Village Council meetings to describe and discuss an upcoming project or action that impacts the community
- District Ranger can attend Village Council meetings on a regular basis, "just to stay in touch."
- Corona Librarian volunteered to be a "Forest Service Liaison," offering to make sure that the community members received information about upcoming events and actions that might impact them.
- The Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District representative reminded the FS staff that the district is a willing and energetic partner on projects.

Summary prepared by Lucy Moore. Please contact her with comments or questions: lucymoore@nets.com or 505-820-2166

Cibola National Forest and Grasslands
Forest Plan Revision Kick-Off Open House
Sandia Ranger District
Los Vecinos Community Center
478 ½ Old Highway 66, Tijeras, NM
Thursday, November 15, 6-8 p.m.

Meeting Summary

Facilitator: Kathleen Bond/KTB Decision Resources

Cibola National Forest Staff/Supervisor's Office
Cynthia Geuss, Planning Staff
Michael Carpinelli, Planning Staff

Sandia Ranger District
Cid Morgan, District Ranger

Meeting Overview

The kick-off meeting at the Los Vecinos Community Center in Tijeras, NM on November 15, 2012, 6-8 p.m. introduced the Cibola National Forest's plan revision process for the Sandia, Mountainair, Magdalena and Mt. Taylor Ranger Districts to interested members of the public. The meeting was one of a series of six community meeting scheduled during November 2013 to provide information at a local community level about steps in the 3-to-4 year process and outline opportunities for public involvement. Two meetings were scheduled for the Sandia District to allow for greater accessibility and participation; there was an earlier meeting on November 13, 2013 in Albuquerque, NM. Nine individuals attended the meeting in Tijeras, one of whom was a reporter for the Mountain View Telegraph and served as an observer. At least two of the participants represented the same interest group.

The meeting agenda was designed to provide an opportunity for information-sharing, dialogue and discussion about the plan revision process. Following a welcome by Cid Morgan, Sandia District Ranger, the facilitator provided an overview of the meeting, including a review of the handouts which are listed at the end of the summary. Michael Carpinelli, planning team, gave a PowerPoint presentation to explain the context of plan revision, its components, and opportunities for public involvement. Participants asked clarifying questions both during the presentation and after in a moderated Q & A. The facilitator then oriented participants to the open house segment of the agenda when they could share information at three "information stations": Plan Revision, Maps and Public Involvement.

In addition to meeting handouts, other resource materials included large scale maps of the Cibola National Forest, district maps, and a poster-sized graphic of the Forest Plan Revision Road Map.

Welcome/Introductions (Cid Morgan, Sandia District Ranger)
Cid Morgan introduced herself and thanked participants for their interest in the Cibola National Forest's plan revision process. She introduced the planning team staff and noted that this meeting is only the beginning of a 3-to-4 year process to revise the current 1985 Plan.

Meeting Overview (Kathleen Bond, facilitator)
Ms. Bond introduced herself as a professional facilitator/mediator based in southwest Colorado who is under contract with the Cibola National Forest to consult on the plan revision effort. Participants were asked to introduce themselves and state their interest in attending the kick-off meeting. She oriented participants to the stations set-up in the multi-purpose room and the availability of refreshments. Referring to the handouts, Ms. Bond reviewed the agenda, meeting objectives, and provided a brief description of information provided in the handouts, paying special attention to the FAQs where contact information and links to Cibola National Forest websites were provided. Noting the handout *How to Comment*, she encouraged participants to make specific, substantive comments throughout the revision process to help inform the planning team and ultimate decision maker-the Forest Supervisor.

Overview: Cibola National Forest Plan Revision (Michael Carpinelli, Planning Staff)
Mr. Carpinelli gave a PowerPoint presentation to provide an overview of plan revision for the four mountain districts (Sandia, Mountainair, Magdalena and Mt. Taylor Ranger Districts) and provided information on the objectives, timeframe, and opportunities for public involvement throughout the process. Setting the context for plan revision, he noted that the process is a statutory requirement for national forests to conduct a planning process every 15-20 years. The three-to-four year process consists of three major phases (assess, revise, monitor) which will result in a Land and Resource Management Plan to guide management of the districts. For numerous reasons, including litigation, the most recent forest plan was in 1985, which followed guidelines in the 1982 Planning Rule. He mentioned that the 2012 Planning Rule emphasizes the enhanced role of the public in the planning process, use of best available science, and provides an opportunity to protect and restore national forests for their ecological, social and economic sustainability. In general, he explained, the framework in the 2012 Rule focuses on "outcomes" as opposed to "outputs," i.e. forest products.

Using the graphic of the Forest Plan Revision Road Map, Mr. Carpinelli reviewed the major phases and steps required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and highlighted opportunities for public involvement in each phase, noting that the phases are complementary and may overlap. He explained the objectives and tasks involved in the initial one-year assessment phase: gather data and other information from numerous sources--including the

public, tribes, local governments and other entities--about current conditions and future trends in an effort to determine the sustainability of social, economic and ecological resources within the planning area and broader landscape. Referring to the Road Map, Mr. Carpinelli noted that the outcome of the assessment phase is an Assessment Report (to be completed by June 2013) which will provide the basis for "needs for change" for revising the 1985 Plan.

Q & A

Given the informal setting of the meeting, and at Mr. Carpinelli's suggestion, some participants raised clarifying questions during the presentation. Further questions were asked during the Q & A session and the planning staff and Cid Morgan responded. While there were questions about the plan revision process, other participants used the opportunity to ask Ms. Morgan about current and proposed management activities on the district. The facilitator moderated the session and took handwritten notes. A summary of questions and responses follows:

Q. What are system drivers? [Referring to a PowerPoint slide listing five important ecological resources in the planning team's assessment of the ecological sustainability and diversity of plant and animal communities]

A. Michael Carpinelli: System drivers are things that influence ecological function, like fire or climate change. It's an ecological term.

Q. What are baseline carbon stocks? [Again, referring to the same PowerPoint slide.]

A. Michael Carpinelli: Carbon stocks are sources of atmospheric carbon diosice that has been incorporated into plant material and soil organic manner. In the assessment, we'll look at the ecosystem service the forest provides in sequestering carbon from the atmosphere.

Q. Will the forest plan include looking at roads?

A. Michael Carpinelli: The forest plan will support the Travel Management decision; some roads will be qualified in the assessment phase.

Q. Does the forest have any challenges?

A. Cid Morgan: Well, people are loving the forest to death. The number of visitors to the Sandia Wilderness is increasing and forest regulations for user groups is the biggest source of complaints from user groups. There are a number of user-created trails at Cedar Crest due to residents creating unauthorized trails from their backyard into the forest. The Sandia District butts up to a major metropolitan area and we have to balance social needs and values with maintaining the wilderness characteristics.

Q. Is this an education issue or blatant disregard?

A. Cid Morgan: It's both. There's a value to maintaining the recreational resources in the face of 2 million visitors per year. The district consists of 100,000 acres and 17,000 acres of that amount are withdrawn lands [military withdrawal]. That works out to 24 people per acre, which is a lot.

Q. Doesn't the plan revision process impact BLM lands?

A. Michael Carpinelli: BLM has a different process, but we're looking at management plans of other agencies', tribal and local government in an all-lands approach emphasized by the 2012 Planning Rule. In the all-lands approach, we'll look at wildlife corridors, invasive species and other issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Participant comment: Bernalillo County Open Space doesn't have a management plan as it's only 500 acres. We don't have the resources but we'd like to latch on to plan revision's science which may be used to support decision making.

Cid Morgan: We did interact with Bernalillo County Open Space during the Travel Management process.

The facilitator extended the Q & A session with group support for an additional 15 minutes. At the end of the extension, she thanked participants and Forest staff for their discussion and suggested that any additional questions could be directed to Ms. Morgan or planning staff during the Open House to follow.

Open House
Meeting participants had the opportunity to talk one-on-one with Forest staff and share information at the three information stations described below.

Table 1

Station	Staffed By	Description of Station/Activities
Plan Revision	Michael Carpinelli Cynthia Geuss	• Clarify questions about the plan revision process • Provide an opportunity to determine if the individual/interest group has data to share for the assessment
Maps	Cid Morgan	• Use large scale maps on tables to help identify areas of interest and use • Refer to Key Considerations poster to consider

		in answering the following questions: 1) Which areas of the District (or forest) are important to you? Why? 2) How do you use the forest? What are some of the activities? 3) How is the forest important to you local community?
Public Involvement	Kathleen Bond	• Share information on the Road Map Graphic and asks how the participant/interest group would like to be involved in plan revision • Identify best time/locations for meetings • Determine individual interest in being part of a future work group • Determine organization/interest group interest in hosting a Forest Service presentation • Receive feedback on the public involvement framework, including ideas on how to outreach to youth

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Meeting Handouts

1. Agenda
2. Kick-off meeting schedule
3. Copy of the Kick-off letter from Nancy Rose, Forest Supervisor
4. PowerPoint presentation
5. Graphic: Forest Plan Revision Road Map
6. Frequently Asked Questions
7. How to Comment (Council on Environmental Quality, A Citizen's Guide to the NEPA, pg. 27)
8. Comment Form
9. Evaluation

Cibola National Forest and Grasslands
Forest Plan Revision Kick-Off Open House
Magdalena High School Fine Arts Center
Magdalena, New Mexico
Friday, November 30, 2012, 1-4 p.m.

Meeting Summary
Facilitator: Kathleen Bond/KTB Decision Resources

Cibola National Forest Staff/Supervisor's Office
Champe Green, Planning Staff
Sarah Beck, Core Planning Team

Magdalena Ranger District Staff
Dennis Aldridge, Magdalena District Ranger
Suzanne De Rozier, Wildlife Biologist
Tina Cason, Range

Meeting Overview
Seventeen members of the public participated in the forest plan revision kick-off meeting on November 30, 2012, 1-4 p.m. at the Magdalena High School Fine Arts Center. The meeting was the sixth in a series of community meetings scheduled to date on the Cibola National Forest's mountain districts to introduce the forest plan revision process. (The four mountain districts include: Sandia, Mountainair, Magdalena and Mt. Taylor Ranger Districts.)

The relative high attendance at the open house was marked with a diversity of participants representing a range of interests. While a few of the participants listed their mailing address as Magdalena, NM, most were from Albuquerque, Socorro and Las Lunas, NM. When asked by the facilitator how they heard about the Magdalena open house, responses ranged from seeing flyers posted in the local community to interest group web postings. Some participants had been aware of an earlier meeting in Albuquerque on November 13, 2012, but had not been able to attend that particular day.

Following a welcome and introductions and a meeting overview, the open house began with a presentation that provided information on the plan revision process, objectives of the current assessment phase, and opportunities for involvement in the collaborative process. A moderated Q & A session followed the presentation. Participants were then oriented to the three "information stations" (Plan Revision, Maps and Public Involvement) which were staffed by Forest Service staff and the facilitator.

In addition to meeting handouts listed at the end of this summary, support materials included a PowerPoint presentation and large scale maps of the Cibola National Forest and the Magdalena District.

Welcome/Introductions (Dennis Aldridge, Magdalena District Ranger)

Dennis Aldridge, Magdalena District Ranger, welcomed participants and introduced the Forest Service staff members in attendance and identified their resource specialty. Mr. Aldridge provided a brief overview of his professional experience in the area and noted that he had worked on the 1985 Forest Plan, the plan that is currently being revised.

Meeting Overview (Kathleen Bond, facilitator)

Kathleen Bond introduced herself as a neutral facilitator/mediator from southwest Colorado under contract to the Cibola National Forest for the plan revision effort and asked participants to introduce themselves to the group. Ms. Bond acknowledged those participants representing a motorized interest group and she clarified that the meeting would not be addressing Travel Management, a separate process the Magdalena Ranger District/Cibola National Forest is currently engaged in.

Ms. Bond provided an overview of the open house format and reviewed the handouts, beginning with the agenda and meeting objectives. Referring to the handout *How to Comment*, Ms. Bond encouraged participants to make specific, substantive comments throughout the process to best inform the decision maker. Then, Ms. Bond reviewed the Ground Rules and asked if anyone had any suggestions for change or additions.

Overview: Cibola National Forest Plan Revision (Champe Green, Planning Staff)

Mr. Green, Forest Planner, presented an overview of the objectives and timeline for the plan revision process and shared information on public involvement opportunities for all phases of the effort. In his introductory remarks he noted the diversity of meeting participants, which included representatives of mining, off-highway vehicles, biking, wilderness and botany interests. He encouraged participants to ask questions during the presentation, as opposed to holding them for the following Q and A session.

With the use of a Power Point presentation, large poster of the Forest Plan Revision Road Map and participant handouts, Mr. Green provided an overview of Forest Plan Revision and the three major phases in the 3-4 year process: assess, revise and monitor. Mr. Green noted that the 2012 Planning Rule emphasizes the role of collaboration--engaging the public in a meaningful, collaborative way throughout the process--and the use of best science available. He also emphasized that the new rule has an overall focus on sustainability, as opposed to output; the focus on sustainability represents a departure from previous planning rules.

In the presentation, Mr. Green detailed components of the current assessment phase when data from numerous sources, including the public, is used to assess "the state of the forest." Information is gathered about the existing conditions and sustainability of goods, services, resources of the forest; the assessment also looks at future conditions and trends in an effort to assess the sustainability of the social, economic and ecological resources within the planning area and the broader landscape. Acknowledging the interests of the participants, Mr. Green noted that the assessment of existing conditions will consider information on mining claim locations, off-road motorized and non-motorized use, and transects of amateur botanists, as well as other data or information provided by the public. Reviewing the required steps in plan revision, Mr. Green explained that the Forest Assessment Report will be the basis for determining which areas of the 1985 Forest Plan need to be changed/revised. (The Forest Assessment Report is scheduled for completion May/June, 2013.) In the second phase, Plan Revision, the planning team will collaboratively develop a draft Forest Plan and monitoring program and will develop alternatives. In the summer of 2016, a preferred alternative to the Plan will be selected, based on comments from the public. In the final phase, the Plan will be monitored and adapted as appropriate.

Mr. Green reviewed the contents of the Assessment Report which includes the current status, trends and potential for 15 ecological, social and economic topic areas. (The five ecological resources to be assessed are as follows: 1) Terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and watersheds; 2) Air, soil and water resources; 3) System drivers, e.g. climate change; 4) Baseline carbon stocks; and, 5) Federally endangered or threatened species, proposed or candidate species and other species of conservation concern.) Continuing the review, he explained that the ten socioeconomic resources topics include archaeological and cultural resources, economic contributions (e.g. range, recreation, and mining) and an assessment of the infrastructure that supports the resources, among others. He noted the Magdalena District's two designated wilderness areas and the Langmuir Research Site and said plan revision will look at the potential for new areas for special designation; for example, areas of zoological, scenic or botanical interest could be considered. In addition to reporting on the current status, trends and potential for the 15 topic areas, the Assessment Report will also document the information gaps and how the best available science was used to inform the report.

Summing up, Mr. Green emphasized the opportunities for public involvement in all phases of plan revision, from helping inform the assessment in this first step to collaboratively developing the needs for change, plan components and monitoring elements.

Q & A

Following the presentation, the facilitator moderated questions from participants in an informal setting where Champe Green, Dennis Aldridge and other staff members answered questions as appropriate and shared information on topics that were raised. The facilitator recorded questions and responses on a notepad. A summary of questions and Forest Service responses follows. Note: items in brackets [ ] are added by the facilitator for clarification.

Q. Why was the Cibola NF selected to be an early adopter of the 2012 Planning Rule?

A. [Champe Green] The forest has an intact planning team and had just completed the Grasslands Plan Revision.

Q. Will the BLM be involved?

A. [Champe Green] The planning team will review BLM's management plan and it will be involved in the process, along with counties and other entities. BLM manages the sub-surface minerals on forest lands. We have a more streamlined planning process.

Q. The Cibola NF is incredibly spread out. Does that make it unique among the other early adopters?

A. [Champe Green] All the early adopter forests have something unique about them. The other forests are: Nez Perce/Clearwater NFs (Idaho); Chugash NF (Alaska); El Yunque NF, Puerto Rico; and the Sierra, Sequoia and Inyo NFs in California.

Q. Are you looking at any other plans?

A. [Champe Green]. Yes, we're looking at tribal and county plans, as well as the NM State Comprehensive Recreation Plan, the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for NM, the NM

Statewide Forest Assessment, and plans of other federal and state agencies near the planning area, in order to minimize conflicts and contribute to joint objectives.

Q. Is sustainability the same focus with BLM?

A. [Champe Green] I would assume so, but their planning process is different and tends to be more output-oriented versus outcome-oriented.

Q. As you gather information, is the metric sustainability and use?

A. [Champe Green] An example is when we compare information on, for example, forest stands. If we're going the wrong way, then that's not sustainable. That's the metric we use ecologically. In terms of recreation, we're looking at what are the current demands and trends, and how recreation opportunities can be provided while not compromising the sustainability of the underlying resources.

Q. There's a lot of overgrazing. How will the plan look at grazing/livestock in terms of sustainability?

A. [Champe Green] We already adhere to adaptive management. As an example, this past year, because of drought, the Grasslands were de-stocked by up to 80%. We want to make sure we don't damage the range. We monitor the utilization to sustain the resource for ranchers.

Comment: [Dennis Aldridge] The drought in the Southwest is a given for every 36 years. We deal with dramatic changes. In the 1950's, there was a real drought. Understanding the impacts of extreme weather events and climate change and managing for resiliency is still a major challenge and it's constantly evolving

Q. Do you have a full-time ecologist or botanist on the planning team?

A [Champe Green] No. The four full-time members of the planning team; all have a Master's degree or Ph.D. We go outside the Forest Service with an interdisciplinary approach. For example, we look to academics from UNM, New Mexico Tech, NMSU, and Highlands University, and they come in as advisors. We don't do things in isolation anymore.

Q. How will the current litigation on the NFMA [National Forest Management Act] 2012 Planning Rule impact how you move ahead?

A. We're trying to use a broad plan that we can use in case the Rule is overturned. If the Rule is struck down (legal briefs will be filed in January 2013), we'll go back to the 1982 Rule and contemporize it. There was a lot of public collaboration in the design of the new rule. We'll use contemporary concepts compatible with the '82 Rule if we have to proceed under that Rule.

Q. Is the Rule on the Internet?

A. Yes, it's on the Forest's web page. You'll find that the last 15-20 pages provide guidance.

Q. Is there a model for plan revision?

A. Yes, the Grasslands Plan.

Q. How will the plan affect hunters?

A. [Champe Green] The National Forest provides the habitat for game species, but the State sets the hunting regulations.

Comment: [Dennis Aldridge] We don't anticipate that hunting to be part of the Forest Plan.

Q. Give me the lowdown on the [relationship between] the Forest and the State.

A. [Champe Green] Our role is to manage the conditions on the Forest; the State manages the wildlife. If the habitat isn't good, the State will take that into consideration in setting its seasons, bag limits and hunting areas

Comment: [Dennis Aldridge] It's all based on the conditions of the Forest.

Q. How is the final alternative selected?

A. [Champe Green] We take the comments, analyze and respond to them, then we take all information based on best science, laws and policies, and blend it with the decision space the Forest Supervisor has. She/he selects the preferred alternative.

There's something new: the objection process. In the past, if there was an appeal to a decision, the Regional Forester or Chief, along with a review board, could reverse the decision-maker, and the appeal, if not resolved, would go to the federal district court for litigation. Under the 2012 Rule, if you've given substantive comments during the process, you can file an objection with the Forest Supervisor and try to work it out. This is a mitigative step to reducing going to court. Under the new rule, the plan will be a lot stronger because the public has been invested throughout the process and relationships have been built.

Comment: (Dennis Aldridge): The old plan has been amended 14 times to address changes in policy, conditions, technology, science. The forest plan will help guide us in forest management. As part of NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act], we'll have additional review of all projects and activities authorized under the Forest Plan on the District [during and after the plan revision process].

In closing the Q & A, the facilitator thanked the participants and Forest staff for the information-sharing and suggested that if there were any lingering questions, participants could talk to staff during the Open House.

Orientation to Stations (Kathleen Bond, facilitator)

The facilitator provided an overview of the three stations for the Open House: Plan Revision, Maps and Public Involvement. In the review, Ms. Bond identified the individuals staffing the stations and described the opportunities for discussion, clarification and commenting at each station. Participants were reminded to use the Comment Forms in their handout packet (and available at the stations) to record any comments or suggestions they may have. She read aloud the discussion questions on a poster at the Maps station (see Table 1 below). Participants were also encouraged to fill out the evaluation form before leaving to help inform future plan revision meetings.

Open House

The Open House offered participants an opportunity to talk to Forest Service staff and share information at three stations located at different points in the multi-purpose room. A description of each station follows.

Table 1

Station	Staffed By	Description of Station/Activities
Plan Revision	Champe Green Sarah Beck	• Clarify questions about the plan revision process • Provide an opportunity to determine if the individual/interest group has data to share for the assessment • One attendee asked that the Forest post on its website a list of electronically linked data sources that are being used in the assessment, in order to be more transparent to the public. This is being done.
Maps	Dennis Aldridge District Staff	• Use large scale maps on tables to help identify areas of interest and use • Refer to the poster on the wall to consider in answering the following questions: 1) Which areas of the District (or forest) are important to you? Why? 2) How do you use the forest? What are some of the activities? 3) How is the forest important to you local community?
Public Involvement	Kathleen Bond	• Share information on the Road Map Graphic and asks how the participant/interest group would like to be involved in plan revision • Identify best time/locations for meetings • Determine individual interest in being part of a future work group • Gauge interest in organization/interest group hosting a Forest Service presentation • Receive feedback on the public involvement framework, including ideas on how to outreach to youth

The meeting was adjourned at 4 p.m.

Meeting Handouts

1. Agenda
2. Kick-off meeting schedule
3. Copy of the Kick-off letter from Nancy Rose, Forest Supervisor

4. PowerPoint presentation
5. Graphic: Forest Plan Revision Road Map
6. Frequently Asked Questions
7. How to Comment (Council on Environmental Quality, A Citizen's Guide to the NEPA, pg. 27)
8. Comment Form
9. Evaluation Form

Cibola Forest Plan Revision
Community Meeting
Mountainair Senior Center
November 15, 2012 – 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Discussion Highlights

Facilitation/Notes: Lucy Moore

Welcome and Introductions:
Forest Service District Ranger Karen Lessard welcomed the group and explained the purpose of the meeting. FS planning staff Champe Green, with wildlife specialist Sarah Beck, made a brief presentation describing the plan revision process and inviting comments on a variety of issues.

Discussion:

Commercial logging: Those attending the meeting were concerned about the lack of opportunity for commercial logging companies, particularly the small local operations. They see timber "going to waste" both before and after forest fires. Many areas are thick with trees and need thinning to reduce the severity of fires in the future. After a major fire, there are dead and standing trees which can be harvested for timber if they are cut within months of the fire. But if they stand too long they rot and are worthless. Loggers added that with climate change and increasing drought, thinning – in a timely and efficient manner -- will be increasingly important.

FS staff understood but said they are constrained by the laws and regulations that require Environmental Assessments on all logging activities in the forest. These EAs take time and must be thorough and detailed or the FS risks challenges in court that drag the process out even longer. In an effort to speed up the permitting process, loggers asked if an EA could be done on areas already burned in the same region, so that when a new area is burned the EA could be tailored quickly to fit that particular situation. FS staff replied that each area is unique, even those in close proximity to each other, and they believed that individual EAs would be necessary, again to avoid challenges in court.

Loggers questioned the FS policy of protecting old trees that have ceased to grow and are beginning to rot. Why not fell those trees before they turn to dust? Loggers also criticized the inconsistencies across districts and forests. On Mt. Taylor different policies seem to apply and loggers can cut these standing trees. FS noted that Endangered Species issues also dictate forest policies and management on individual districts,. In addition, with limited funding, protection of people and homes takes priority for FS thinning and treatment projects.

FS staff acknowledged that their mission also includes protecting the local economy. They said that specific information on areas that need thinning would be very useful in the plan revision process. They expressed appreciation to the logging interests and Soil and Water Conservation District representative who attended, and hoped to continue this dialogue as the plan revision process moves forward.

There was discussion about markets for byproducts from timber harvest, like bark slabs and chips. A paper mill in western Kansas takes soft wood. Local loggers had considered a pellet mill but ran into regulations and permitting requirements that were burdensome.

The group discussed the "pendulum" of environmental reaction to logging and grazing practices on FS land. In the past, in some areas grazing and logging resulted in damage to forest resources, and the reaction from the environmental community was swift. Now, their influence makes permitting such activities slow and difficult. Those present wished for some kind of balance, where local economies could flourish and the resource still be protected. "We need all the interests contributing to this plan revision," said FS staff. "Then our project implementation will be a smoother process."

Summary prepared by Lucy Moore. Please contact her with comments or questions: lucymoore@nets.com or 505-820-2166

Cibola National Forest and Grasslands
Forest Plan Revision Kick-Off Open House
Sandia Ranger District
UNM Continuing Education Building
1634 University Blvd., Albuquerque, NM
Tuesday, November 13, 2012, 6-8 p.m.

Meeting Summary

Facilitator: Kathleen Bond/KTB Decision Resources

Cibola National Forest Staff/Supervisor's Office
Champe Green, Planning Staff
Cynthia Geuss, Planning Staff
Ruth Sutton, Public Affairs Office
Cynthia Benedict, Tribal Liaison

Sandia Ranger District
Cid Morgan, District Ranger
Bob Heiar, Recreation

Meeting Overview
The public meeting in Albuquerque, NM on Tuesday, November 13, 2012, was one in a series of six meetings scheduled to kick-off forest plan revision for the Sandia, Mountainair, Magdalena and Mt. Taylor Ranger Districts of the Cibola National Forest. Located just east of the greater Albuquerque metropolitan area in the Sandia Mountains, and Manzanita Mountains further south, the Sandia District offers open space and numerous recreational opportunities for an urban population of 700,000. Given the proximity to Albuquerque, the Sandia Mountains are the most visited mountains in the State of New Mexico. The public meeting at the UNM Continuing Education Building in central Albuquerque was one of two public meeting venues for the Sandia District; the other meeting was scheduled in Tijeras, NM. The location and meeting time were selected to provide accessibility and allow for greater participation. A total of ten members of the public representing a diversity of interests participated in the meeting.

Welcome/Introductions (Cid Morgan, District Ranger)
Ms. Morgan welcomed participants to the kick-off meeting for plan revision and asked Forest Service staff to introduce themselves and identify their resource specialty. She briefly described the timeframe for plan revision and expectations for the meeting. She then turned the meeting over to the facilitator.

Meeting Overview (Kathleen Bond, facilitator)
Kathleen Bond, meeting facilitator, introduced herself as a professional facilitator/mediator from southwest Colorado under contract with the Cibola National Forest to consult on the plan revision effort. She added that part of her job was to assist the forest in the design, facilitation and documentation of a collaborative process marked by meaningful dialogue and information exchange. She then asked the participants to introduce themselves to the group.

She provided an overview of the open house format that included a presentation, Q & A, and an opportunity to share information at three stations set up in the room. She reviewed the handouts (listed at the end of this document) and emphasized the meeting's objectives: 1) Provide an introduction to the Plan Revision process and the implications of the new national planning rule; 2) Share information about the Plan Revision effort on the Mountain Districts and how the public can be involved; 3) Provide an opportunity for participants to provide information how they value and use the Cibola National Forest. Participants were encouraged to review materials to the extent possible during the meeting, share information and ask clarifying questions.

Overview: Cibola National Forest Plan Revision (Champe Green, Planning Staff)
Mr. Green provided an overview of the collaborative plan revision process which will result in a Land and Resource Management Plan (Plan) which will guide management of the Cibola National Forest for the next 15-20 years. Throughout the presentation, he linked opportunities for public involvement with plan components in the three-phase process which will occur over the next three-four years. When the planning process is completed, he explained, it will be monitored with the help of the public until the next plan revision comes around.

Mr. Green used a PowerPoint presentation to explain the objectives, phases and revision timeframe. During the presentation, he referred to support materials which included a poster-sized graphic of the Forest Plan Revision Road Map, large-scale forest and district maps, and information in the handouts. He emphasized there are opportunities for public involvement in all phases of revision. Setting the context, Mr. Green explained that plan revision is a statutory requirement for national forests and plans should be revised every 15-20 year. For numerous reasons, including litigation, the last forest plan on the Cibola National Forest was in 1985, which followed guidelines established in the 1982 Planning Rule. Mr. Green underscored that the new 2012 Planning rule will provide an adaptive framework for the Cibola National Forest to create local management plans which are flexible and responsive to changing conditions.

As plan revision was just completed for the Grasslands administrative unit of the Cibola National Forest, the current planning effort is focused on the four mountain districts: Sandia, Mountainair, Mt. Taylor and Magdalena Ranger Districts. He emphasized that a major difference from the 1982 Planning Rule is that the new 2012 Rule provides the opportunity to help protect and

restore national forests for ecological, social and economic sustainability, as opposed to output of forest products. Further, he said, a hallmark of the Rule's framework is the emphasis on best science, a strengthened role of public collaboration, and Forest Service transparency.

In an explanation of the three major phases of the plan (assess, revise, monitor), Mr. Green referred to the graphic Forest Plan Revision Road Map, a description of the plan revision process on a timeline and discussed activities within each phase. Using an analogy of personal financial planning, where an individual would initially take stock of current assets and future needs, Mr. Green drew a parallel with the first step of plan revision: a one-year assessment phase. In assessing "the state of the Forest," the planning team will gather data and other information from numerous sources, including interested members of the public, about existing conditions and future trends to help determine that sustainability of social, economic and ecological resources within the planning area and broader landscape. The outcome of the assessment is the Forest Assessment Report which is to be completed by /June 2013; the document, which will be made available to the public for review, will provide the basis for ("needs for change" for revising the 1985 Forest Plan.

Q & A

Following the presentation, the facilitator moderated clarifying questions from participants. Mr. Green or other Forest Staff responded to questions as appropriate while the facilitator recorded questions and responses on a notepad. The following is a summary of the Q & A session. Note: items in brackets [ ] are provided by the facilitator for clarification.

Q. There seems to be a national initiative in a move to get off an oil-based focus. Is that part of the assessment?

A. Champe Green: There has already been interest by wind energy developers in the Manzanos Mountains, but no proposal has been formalized. There are no proposals pending for wind farms on the Forest, and no commercial turbines occur on the Forest. Yes, we will assess wind energy development potential during the assessment.

Cid Morgan: There's also transmission lines in the works which may go across the forest.

Q. Are you looking at current or future economic benefits?

A. Champe Green: We're looking at the current benefits, e.g. biomass. One question we'll be asking is: can we amortize the benefits to look into the future.

Cid Morgan: We'll probably address issues like that in the EIS [Environmental Impact Statement].

Champe Green: In the needs for change, if the public wants to make more of a focus on future economic benefits, and we get agreement and support, we may designate the focus in plan components.

Q. Are you collaborating with local governments?

A. Champe Green: Yes, we're working with 10 county governments.

Q. How are alternatives selected?

A. Champe Green: Some alternatives are based on public involvement/comments.

Q. What will be the drop dead date for comments?

A. Champe Green: Scoping start in the summer of 2013 when we're starting the revision. Comments will be taken now during the assessment and throughout the process.

Q. What sort of general features in the 1985 Plan are subject to revision?

A. Champe Green: After compiling the assessment report and then using that as a basis for collaboratively discussing with the public the needs for change to the 1985 Plan, we will identify sustainability issues that become apparent and other issues. The 1985 Plan is available on the website.

Cid Morgan: The 1985 plan was focused on outputs-forest products. In the 2012 Plan, forest products are more of a by-product. For example, we'll need to look at the health of a forest stand before thinking about cutting.

Q. Where do I get a copy of the 2012 Planning Rule?

A. Champe Green: There's a link on the FAQs in the handouts. It was published in the Federal Register.

Q. How does the assessment fit into the agency's climate change road map? Where does the watershed framework come in with climate change?

A. Champe Green: We will be reviewing many climate change models and lots of data and making an assessment of how climate change is currently affecting the forest and projected trends. Climate change, for example, is affecting and will affect recreation, wildfire

management vegetation management, grazing, wildlife and habitat, and water availability, just to name a few.

Cid Morgan: We're looking at sustainable recreation.

Q. How might volunteers submit information for the assessment? Does the Cibola NF have an ecologist or professional botanist on staff?

A. Champe Green: There are split duties between individuals. I have three people on the core planning team who are highly skilled. Mike Carpinelli, for example, came to us from NRCS [Natural Resources Conservation Service]. We have expertise, but we want yours, too. There's also a regional ecologist at the Regional Office we use. Our job is to manage for sustainability and resiliency of our plant communities and thus our wildlife and habitat—that's a focus for us.

The facilitator thanked participants for their questions and encouraged them to talk further with Forest staff at the Open House or to contact Champe Green at the contact information provided at the bottom of the agenda.

Orientation to Stations (Kathleen Bond, facilitator)
The facilitator oriented participants to three stations located in the room: Plan Revision, Maps and Public Involvement, described the opportunity for information-sharing at each station, and identified individuals who would staff the stations. Referring to the comment forms, Ms. Bond emphasized that participants were welcome to share their ideas on the plan revision effort, comment on the values they held for areas of the forest, and/or provide ideas on how they may like to participate in the planning process. In closing, she asked participants to fill out the evaluation form before leaving to help her and the planning team assess the effectiveness of the meeting.

Open House
Meeting participants could share information with Forest staff and at the three stations described below in Table 1. While some participants visited all the stations, most participants were interested in the Plan Revision station.

Table 1

Station	Staffed By	Description of Station/Activities
Plan Revision	Champe Green Sarah Beck	• Clarify questions about the plan revision process • Provide an opportunity to determine if the

		individual/interest group has data to share for the assessment
Maps	Cid Morgan, District Ranger Bob Heiar, Recreation	• Use large scale maps on tables to help identify areas of interest and use • Refer to Key Considerations poster to consider in answering the following questions: 1) Which areas of the District (or forest) are important to you? Why? 2) How do you use the forest? What are some of the activities? 3) How is the forest important to you local community?
Public Involvement	Kathleen Bond	• Share information on the Road Map Graphic and asks how the participant/interest group would like to be involved in plan revision • Identify best time/locations for meetings • Determine individual interest in being part of a future work group • Determine organization/interest group interest in hosting a Forest Service presentation • Receive feedback on the public involvement framework, including ideas on how to outreach to youth

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Meeting Handouts

1. Agenda
2. Kick-off meeting schedule
3. Copy of the Kick-off letter from Nancy Rose, Forest Supervisor
4. PowerPoint presentation
5. Graphic: Forest Plan Revision Road Map
6. Frequently Asked Questions
7. How to Comment (Council on Environmental Quality, A Citizen's Guide to the NEPA, pg. 27)
8. Comment Form
9. Evaluation

Cibola National Forest and Grasslands
Forest Plan Revision
Summary: Kick-off Open House
Torreon Community Center
Torreon, New Mexico
Wednesday, November 14, 2012, 6-8 p.m.

Facilitator: Kathleen Bond/KTB Decision Resources

Cibola National Forest
Champe Green, Forest Planner
Cynthia Geuss, Planning Team
Karen Lessard, Mountainair District Ranger
Arlene Perea, Mountainair Ranger District, Recreation

Overview
The open house in Torreon, NM was one of six community meetings scheduled to kick-off the forest plan revision process on the four mountain districts on the Cibola National Forest: Sandia, Mountainair, Magdalena and Mt. Taylor. Three kick-off meetings were scheduled for the Mountainair District to provide opportunities for participation at a local community level. Information about the scheduled meetings was communicated via a kick-off letter from Nancy Rose, Forest Supervisor, flyers posted at meeting places in the communities, and the forest's website among other media, including a recent article in the Mountain View Telegraph.

Designed to provide an introduction to plan revision and outline public involvement opportunities in the 4-5 year process, the open house format offered three stations staffed by forest staff and the facilitator: Plan Revision, Maps and Plan Revision.

Meeting support materials included a PowerPoint presentation which provided an overview of plan revision and a description of the initial assessment phase. Support materials included a handout packet (list of handouts is available at the end of the

summary) and large poster-sized maps of the district and the Cibola National Forest.

The open house in Torreon offered residents of the Torreon Land Grant--and non-land grant citizens in the area--an opportunity to learn about plan revision and to share information on existing conditions for the initial assessment phase. The Torreon Community Center is a well-known, accessible location that is routinely used by the Mountainair District staff to share information with local residents.

Meeting Summary

Only one individual attended the Torreon open house: a reporter from the Mountain View Telegraph who was there to serve as an observer. In an informal setting, Forest staff provided the reporter with information about plan revision, reviewed maps, and discussed opportunities for public involvement throughout the process.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Meeting Handouts

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2. Kick-off meeting schedule
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