

Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Wildland Fire Management Amendment to the Carson National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan

**USDA Forest Service
Carson National Forest
Taos, Rio Arriba, Colfax, and Mora Counties, New Mexico**

Introduction

The Carson National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (forest plan) was approved in October 1986. It was developed to provide broad, general programmatic direction for managing the Carson National Forest. It is meant to be a dynamic document responding to monitoring, science, new information, changing conditions, and the latest technologies. Although the forest plan has been amended 13 times since 1986, its standards and guidelines still reflect agency fire management policy of the time, that is to say, actively suppressing most wildfires.

In 1995, a national review was conducted on the efficiency and effects of wildland fire suppression. In August 2000, the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior agreed upon a National Fire Plan to govern interagency fire management. One component of the National Fire Plan is the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, which presents the option for agency managers to use wildland fire to achieve natural resource. In 2009, key changes were made in the way the Federal Fire Policy is implemented. To facilitate those changes, the Guidance for Implementation of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy was developed to ensure consistent implementation of the Federal Fire Policy (found at: http://www.nifc.gov/policies/policies_documents/GIFWFMP.pdf). The revised guidance changes some elements of implementation of wildland fire management, including a change in terminology and how a wildland fire can be managed.

Background

The 1986 forest plan's management direction focuses on fire suppression, although it allows unplanned ignitions in areas across the forest, but with restrictions that were common in 1986. This fire management policy is outdated and limits the ability of the Carson National Forest to use wildland fire to help restore and maintain historic vegetation communities and improve wildlife habitats. The forest plan needed to be updated to reflect current federal fire management policy and direction based on changes made in 1995, 2001, and 2009. Incorporating new language into the forest plan would provide clarity and avoid confusion among resource managers.

Considering the historic role fire has played on the Carson National Forest and the outdated status of the forest plan, in April 2009 the Forest Service proposed to amend the Carson forest plan to broaden the applications for managing wildland fire (planned or unplanned ignitions) on the

Carson National Forest by changing the wording in the forest plan to reflect updated National Fire Policy.

An environmental assessment (EA) was prepared to document the analysis of comparing the effects of the proposed forest plan amendment to the effects of keeping the forest plan as it is currently written. This EA is programmatic and analyzes the general, landscape-level, environmental impacts of implementing the proposed amendment and the no action alternative using the best available science.

Decision

Based upon my careful review of the EA and the documents in the project record,¹ I have decided to implement alternative 2, the proposed amendment. The selected alternative will broaden the applications for managing wildland fire on the Carson National Forest by changing the wording in the forest plan to reflect updated National Fire Policy. The wording in chapter C and chapter D of the forest plan will be changed as summarized below:

1. **ADD** in Chapter C – Forest-wide Prescriptions for Fire, under “Management Highlights”:
 - **Fire, as a critical natural process, is integrated into activities on a landscape scale and across agency boundaries. Wildland fire will be used to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and, as closely as possible, be allowed to function in its natural ecological role.**
2. **REPLACE** the Fire Suppression standard in Chapter C – Forest-wide Prescriptions (Fire), under “Standards and Guidelines” with:
 - **FIRE . . . Fire response will be appropriate for each planned or unplanned fire ignition by considering the fire environment and management area prescriptions. Every consideration will be given to use fire to help meet management area objectives, while providing for public safety and property protection.**
3. **REMOVE** the Fire standards in Chapter D – Management Area Prescriptions from eighteen MAs (MA 1-13, 15-17, and 19-20). No changes will be made to the existing wording in the forest plan for MA 14 (Riparian Areas), MA 18 (Wild and Scenic Rivers), or MA 21 (Valle Vidal).
4. **ADD** in Chapter D – Management Area Prescriptions, Management Area 17 - Wilderness

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION

- **Fire is a critical natural process in wilderness. Wildland fire functions in its natural ecological role on a landscape scale and across wilderness boundaries.**

¹ The project record index is attached to this decision document.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

- **FIRE... To allow fire to play a natural role in wilderness, consider a full range of management responses, including planned ignitions (prescribed fire) and unplanned ignitions (wildland fire use and suppression).**
- **FIRE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES... All fire management actions within wilderness shall be conducted in a manner compatible with overall wilderness desired conditions including the character and values associated with each individual wilderness area.**
- **Decisions for the appropriate suppression tool or tactic in the wilderness should receive the same considerations for firefighter and public safety and the protection of values at risk as they would outside of wilderness.**

Appendix A of the EA shows these changes in detail. Under this decision, fire suppression tactics will be used where needed, but it will also provide the forest supervisor, district rangers, and fire managers the option to manage both planned and unplanned ignitions to achieve resource benefits.

At the time of an unplanned ignition, the fire decision support tool (currently called the Wildland Fire Decision Support System or WFDSS) will be initiated. This tool will assist wildland fire managers and the line officer (district ranger, forest supervisor, regional forester, or Chief of the Forest Service, depending on the size and type of fire) in assessing risks and fire behavior. When a fire starts, the use of this tool will help determine fire suppression tactics and/or determine if the fire could be used to meet forest plan objectives. The WFDSS and how it will be used is described in more detail in chapter 2 of the EA. The WFDSS ensures consistency with forest plan goals, objectives, as well as standards, and guidelines. It also takes into account natural, cultural, and social values; location of these values; hazard condition class and fire behavior; season; barriers to fire spread; and potential duration of fire related to risk.

In accordance with agency policy, the Forest Service will suppress wildland fires immediately, if there is a threat to life, property, or resources that cannot be mitigated. The public will be notified in the event of a wildland fire and any campgrounds or other developed sites on National Forest System lands in the vicinity of the fire will be closed. In accordance with New Mexico's Smoke Management Program requirements, nearby communities will be notified of any wildland fire.

Rationale for the Decision

When compared to the no action alternative, the selected alternative will update the Carson forest plan to be consistent with Federal Fire Policy and direction for managing planned and unplanned ignitions for resource benefit. It addresses the purpose and need for action and provides enhanced flexibility in managing wildland fire on the Carson National Forest.

This is a programmatic decision that is not directly related to a specific project and it will not authorize any ground-disturbing actions. Updating the forest plan with any amendment is an administrative and programmatic action that itself has no impacts on the environment. The selected alternative will simply change wording in the forest plan in order to allow expanded use of fire as a tool to meet current resource objectives of the forest plan's management areas (MAs).

Forest-wide standards and guidelines and some MA-specific standards and guidelines are modified (EA, appendix A) to remove current restrictions on use of fire as a tool to meet resource objectives, but these edits would not change the overall resource goals or desired conditions outlined in the forest plan.

This decision also adds a desired condition element to Management Area 17 – Wilderness and changes standards and guidelines related to fire and wilderness. The desired condition is modified to emphasize fire as a critical natural process in wilderness and wildland fire functions in its natural ecological role on a landscape scale and across wilderness boundaries. In addition, this decision adds appropriate standards and guidelines for managing fire in wilderness areas. These changes are not in conflict with the management objectives already provided for wilderness in the forest plan, but provide additional guidance for line officers and fire managers in the event of an ignition within wilderness or a wildland fire that may encroach into wilderness.

The selected alternative provides the opportunity to use planned and unplanned ignitions for resource benefit in order to meet forest plan goals and objectives. This will result in some fires allowed to burn in fire-adapted ecosystems where resource objectives can be met. Site-specific resource values and effects will be assessed at the time an actual planned or unplanned ignition occurs. When this happens, resource impacts are assessed and evaluated as part of the WFDSS process. This process is described briefly in the previous section and in detail in chapter 2 of the EA.

No significant issues were identified for this project, based on internal and public scoping. However, several relevant resources were analyzed in the EA to assist in describing the overall scope of effects of implementing the alternatives. These resources are discussed briefly in the next section and in detail in chapter 3 of the EA.

As discussed later in this decision, implementing the selected alternative will not result in significant environmental effects. This decision meets requirements under the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Act of 1974, as amended by the National Forest Management Act, and implementing regulations found in 36 CFR Part 219.

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the selected alternative, I considered the no action alternative (alternative 1). As described in the EA, “no action” is equivalent to “no change” from current management direction or level of management intensity determined by the forest plan. Under alternative 1, the forest plan, as currently written, would continue to guide our management of wildland fire suppression and planned and unplanned ignitions on the Carson National Forest. Use of wildland fire for resource benefit would be permissible, but under current management area standards. These standards are shown in appendix A of the EA.

Appropriate management response would primarily be limited to confinement, containment, and surveillance. Fuels will continue to be actively managed by means of planned ignitions (prescribed fire) and mechanical treatments. This alternative served as the baseline for comparing the effects of the proposed amendment (alternative 2).

Public Involvement and Scoping

As described in the background, the need for this action arose in 2009. A proposal to amend the forest plan for wildland fire management was listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions starting in April 2009. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during scoping from April 6 through May 1, 2009. The scoping letter included a detailed description of the proposed action and was sent to 32 members of the public, agencies, and Tribes. The scoping letter was also posted on the Carson National Forest's website. Four comment letters were received—two from groups, one from the New Mexico Environment Department, and one from the Navajo Nation. Appendix B of the EA includes a summary of the scoping comments received and the Forest Service's responses to the comments.

Public scoping comments generally expressed concern about the impacts of wildland fire on federally listed species, Forest Service sensitive species, species in decline, terrestrial and aquatic habitats, riparian vegetation, air quality, and community watersheds. The proposed amendment and the amendment process focuses on how we should manage planned and unplanned ignitions and not the site-specific details regarding the environmental impacts from a wildland fire. While public scoping comments included concerns regarding effects of wildland fire on resources, such as air quality and wildlife, such details would be speculative and could not be accurately calculated in the EA. The effects of unplanned ignitions would vary widely and depend on numerous factors, such as the location of the ignition, weather conditions, fuel and habitat types, topography, and whether all necessary conditions to manage the fire for resource benefit are met.

Comments related to specific environmental impacts of fire on natural resources do not fit the definition of "significant issues" under NEPA; therefore, no significant issues were identified. However, we did develop a list of relevant resources to assist in describing the overall scope of effects of implementing the alternatives. These resources are discussed in more detail in chapter 3 of the EA and include: soil and water (watersheds); air quality; upland vegetation; wildlife; federally listed threatened, endangered, and candidate plant and wildlife species; Forest Service sensitive species; forest plan management indicator species; recreation and scenery; cultural resources; special designations; human health and safety; socioeconomics; and climate change.

Public involvement will continue with the distribution of this Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact to those that commented during the scoping period or have otherwise expressed interest. A legal notice of the decision will be published in the newspaper of record.

Future Consultation

As discussed in more detail in the cultural resources, wildlife, and air quality sections of EA, chapter 3, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and concerned Tribes, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) will be consulted at the start of a wildland fire (either managed for resource benefit or for suppression).

For cultural resources, the Carson National Forest will work under the programmatic agreement (PA) between the Forest Service and the SHPO and we will provide for the protection of known fire-sensitive National Register historic properties, as much as possible. If any habitation sites, plant gathering areas, human remains, and objects of cultural patrimony are inadvertently

discovered during implementation of the fire, applicable Tribes will be notified in accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

For federally listed species, we will notify the USFWS if impacts to species or critical habitats are expected. Under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, wildfire is considered an emergency and emergency consultation we will be initiated whenever there is potential for federally listed species to be affected by the fire.

The New Mexico Environment Department will also be consulted to protect and monitor air quality from smoke impacts and to develop emission reduction techniques. Smoke emissions must be authorized by the NMED and monitored for compliance with all Federal and state regulations.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The following is a summary of the project analysis to determine significance, as defined in the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1508.27). "Significant" as used in NEPA requires consideration of both context and intensity of expected effects.

Context means the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts (i.e., local, regional, worldwide) and over short and long time frames.

Intensity refers to the severity of the expected impacts and is defined by the 10 points below.

Context

The selected action is local, as it will be limited to the Carson National Forest. No regional, state-wide, national, or international impacts are foreseen.

Intensity

The following factors were considered to evaluate intensity.

1. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on the balance the effects will be beneficial.

There will be no significant adverse or beneficial impacts from this decision. Both beneficial and adverse effects were considered and are documented in the EA (EA, pp. 17-33). The purpose of the selected alternative is to update fire management direction in the Carson forest plan based on current federal wildland fire policy. The beneficial effect of reestablishing a more natural fire regime and allowing naturally-caused fire to play its role in the environment did not bias the finding. There is potential for negative impacts from wildland fire (e.g., smoke, visual quality, modification of wildlife habitat). Long-term impacts will promote more sustainable and resilient forest conditions and reduce the risk of an uncharacteristically large and intense wildfire.

The amendment is a programmatic action that is not directly related to a specific project and does not authorize ground-disturbing actions. Site-specific National Environmental Policy Act analyses and prescribed fire burn plans are required for prescribed burning projects, and

responses to unplanned ignitions require development of wildland fire implementation plans and associated decision criteria.

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

There will be no significant effects to public health or safety (EA, pp. 30-32). As described in the EA, key considerations to be made in determining whether to manage a planned or unplanned ignition for resource benefit or to suppress the fire, include safety of fire fighters, proximity to residential areas/ urban interface, and impacts to air quality. Potential effects of smoke on residents will be factored into each decision on whether to allow wildland fire to be managed for resource benefit in a specific location. Each decision to manage or suppress a fire will be based on resource-specific criteria. With regard to air quality, maintenance of national ambient air quality standards will be a primary criterion. Current implementation compliance from the New Mexico Environment Department, Air Quality Division and the Environmental Protection Agency provide the criteria for smoke management.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

There will be no significant effects to unique characteristics of the area (EA, pp. 29-30). Under the selected alternative, current fire/fire suppression language will be removed from MA 17 (Wilderness), MA 19 (Special Areas), and MA 20 (Semi Primitive), which will provide greater flexibility to manage fire ignitions for resource benefits. No changes will be made to MA 18 (Wild and Scenic Rivers) or to MA 21 (Valle Vidal). There are currently no specific guidelines related to fire for these two MAs and this will not change with implementation of the selected alternative.

The desired condition for MA 17 (Wilderness) is modified to emphasize fire as a critical natural process in wilderness and wildland fire functions in its natural ecological role on a landscape scale and across wilderness boundaries. Appropriate standards and guidelines for managing fire in wilderness areas are also added. These changes are not in conflict with the management objectives already provided for wilderness in the forest plan, but provide additional guidance for line officers and fire managers in the event of an ignition within wilderness or a wildland fire that may encroach into wilderness. All fires managed in wilderness will ensure consistency with the Wilderness Act and the preservation of wilderness values.

Managing planned and unplanned ignitions in or near MA 17, 19, and 20 will only occur if fire will move these areas toward their desired conditions and protect their designated resource values (e.g., roadless area characteristics, research values, wilderness values, semi-primitive values, and wild horse management options). Therefore, values in specially designated areas will not be measurably affected.

The selected alternative will decrease risk of affecting sensitive plant and animal species and their habitat due to the decreased probability of high severity fire over time (EA, pp. 24-27). Under the selected alternative, wildland fire will be managed for resource benefit only when specific conditions are met, including weather patterns that allow for more predictable fire management and quicker smoke dispersal, and when slower-moving, less intense fires will

result. As a result of the selected alternative, hazardous fuels conditions will be reduced, greatly decreasing the potential for a severe, stand replacement fire over the long-term. In general, this will benefit wildlife and plant species, since such fires can cause much greater wildlife mortality and result in the destruction or elimination of important wildlife and plant habitat for decades or even centuries. A biological assessment and evaluation for this project describes the potential for effects to federally listed and Forest Service sensitive species and can be found in the project record.

See Significance Factor #8 for the evaluation of historic and cultural resources.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The effects of this decision are unlikely to be highly controversial in a scientific sense. No evidence has been presented that raises substantial questions as to the correctness of the environmental consequences that have been estimated. I have considered the best available science in making this decision. The EA and project record demonstrates a thorough review of relevant scientific information, including scientific references and Forest Service specialist evaluations regarding fire and how it plays a natural ecological role in ecosystems. No opposing views from the scientific community were brought forward during this analysis. Incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and risk were acknowledged in the EA, where it was appropriate.

Effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. The primary impact from managing ignitions for resource benefit is smoke. As previously discussed, all Federal, state and local air quality laws and regulations will be adhered to during the course of any wildland fire incident.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The Forest Service has considerable experience managing wildland fires. The effects analysis in the EA describes the general differences between resource effects from low-severity fire (more typical of managing ignitions for resource benefit) and high-severity fire (more typical of implementing the no action alternative). While these effects are dependent on the location, season, and duration of the fire, among other factors, they are not highly uncertain nor do they involve unique or unknown risks (EA, pp. 17-33).

6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

This action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects. This decision to amend the Carson forest plan is an administrative change that will not have any direct environmental effects on the ground. The national emphasis for land management agencies is to move forward with developing an appropriate management response to all wildland fires and use of planned and unplanned ignitions for resource benefit when and where appropriate.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

As stated in chapter 3 of the EA, because no management action will be taken under the selected alternative. Implementing this decision will not contribute to the cumulative impacts of past, present, or foreseeable future actions. However, not taking action to reduce fuel loading and reduce the risk of high severity fire across the Carson National Forest will also not contribute positively to other past and on-going management actions (e.g., prescribed burning and thinning projects) across the forest that are being implemented to reduce likelihood of high-severity fire and begin to move areas toward a more natural fire regime.

The selected alternative is a change in existing fire management policy that will provide the Carson National Forest with more options to help restore fire to its natural role in the ecosystem. This change to the Carson forest plan does not have “on the ground” site-specific effects; therefore, there are no cumulative effects (EA, p. 33). However, the positive effects of past and on-going actions conducted on the forest (e.g., prescribed burning and thinning projects), combined with implementing this decision, will continue to contribute to a shift toward vegetation conditions more similar to pre-European American settlement conditions and a more natural fire regime.

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant cultural or historical resources.

The action will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (EA, pp. 28-29). Articulation of the fire-management policy change in an amendment to the forest plan is not considered an undertaking as defined in the National Historic Preservation Act. This action will not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. Managing ignitions for resource benefit will typically result in low- or moderate-severity fire conditions (EA, pp. 17-18); therefore, effects to cultural resources from managing fires for resource benefit are expected to be much less than those resulting from a high-severity wildfire. Fire-sensitive cultural resources will be protected as much as possible during any fire managed for resource benefit; unknown cultural sites will be more at risk than known sites. Over the long-term, the probability of severe, stand-replacing fires that are more potentially damaging to cultural resources than low-severity fires will be reduced (EA, chapter 3).

All ignitions managed for resource benefit are considered an undertaking under the National Historic Preservation Act. As part of the WFDSS process initiated at the onset of a wildland fire, consultation will occur with the district, zone, or forest archaeologist to determine the potential for effects to cultural resources. This process is in accordance with the programmatic agreement (PA) developed with the SHPO. The PA currently focuses on natural ignitions and considers them an emergency situation that must adhere to the procedures in 36 CFR 800.12 (*Region 3 First Amended Programmatic Agreement [2003]: Section IV. Programmatic Consultation; A. Undertakings Subject to Consultation; Part 6. Emergency Situations*). This requires the Carson National Forest to notify SHPO and concerned Tribes of the situation and provide for the protection of known fire sensitive National Register historic

properties, as much as possible. Until an appendix to the current PA can be developed, the forest is permitted to use 36 CFR 800.12 to deal with managed ignitions.

If any habitation sites, plant gathering areas, human remains and objects of cultural patrimony are inadvertently discovered during implementation of the fire, applicable tribes will be notified in accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act.

A biological assessment (BA) and biological evaluation (BE) have been prepared for this project. The BA describes the potential for effects to federally listed species, while the BE describes potential effects for Forest Service sensitive species. As outlined in the environmental assessment, as well as the BA and BE, this decision will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or habitat that has been determined critical under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973. This decision will not have any direct effects to wildlife in and of itself. Upon the ignition of a wildland fire, impacts to federally listed species or habitat will be assessed on a site-specific individual basis. Emergency Section 7 consultation in compliance with ESA will be completed, where the potential for effects to federally listed species or their critical habitat is identified (EA, pp. 24-25, 59-65).

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

This action will not violate Federal, state, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA.

Conclusion

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA and relevant project record documents, I have determined my decision will not have significant effects on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

National Forest Management Act and Forest Plan Consistency

This decision to amend the forest plan with updated Federal wildland fire policy is consistent with the intent of the Carson forest plan's long term goals. The changes are additions to, modifications, or clarifications of existing standards and guidelines. No goals or desired conditions for any management area will change based on implementing the selected alternative.

Significance Determination

This action constitutes a non-significant amendment to the forest plan. As summarized in Forest Service Manual 1926.51, changes to the forest plan that are not significant can result from 1)

actions that do not significantly alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management; 2) adjustments of management area boundaries or prescriptions resulting from further on-site analysis when the adjustments do not cause significant changes in the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management; 3) minor changes in standards and guidelines; or 4) opportunities for additional projects or activities that will contribute to achievement of the management prescription. The selected alternative clearly meets these criteria and is considered non-significant. It is my finding that the actions of this decision comply with the requirements of the National Forest Management Act of 1976.

This amendment is in response to new information regarding Federal wildland fire policy. I followed the direction found in Forest Service Manual 1926.51 and 1926.52 and determined this is not a significant amendment to the Carson forest plan.

Best Available Science

I am confident the analysis for this amendment was conducted using the best available science. My conclusion is based on a review of the record that shows my staff conducted a thorough review of relevant scientific information, considered responsible opposing views, and acknowledged incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and risk. Please refer to the project record for specific discussions of the science and methods used for analysis and for literature reviewed and referenced.

Administrative Review and Appeal Rights

This amendment decision is subject to administrative review pursuant to *Optional Appeal Procedures Available during the Planning Rule Transition Period* (formerly 36 CFR 217). Other than Forest Service employees, any person or any non-Federal organization or entity may challenge this decision and request a review by the Forest Service line officer at the next administrative level.

A written notice of appeal must be filed within 45 days, with the appeal period beginning the day after publication of the legal notice in *The Taos News* as provided for in Section 8(b)(1). Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely on dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

The appeal must be filed either through regular mail, fax, email, hand delivery, or express delivery). Written appeals must be submitted to:

1. U.S Mail or express delivery: Appeal Reviewing Officer, Corbin Newman, Regional Forester, 333 Broadway Blvd SE, Albuquerque, NM 87102-3407;
2. E-mail: appeals-southwestern-regional-office@fs.fed.us. Please put APPEAL and **Carson NF Fire Management Forest Plan Amendment** in the subject line;
3. Delivered to: Appeal Reviewing Officer, Corbin Newman, Regional Forester, 333 Broadway Blvd SE, Albuquerque, NM between the hours of 8 am and 4:30 pm, Monday - Friday; or
4. Faxed to: Appeal Deciding Officer at (505) 842-3173

The appeal must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic appeals. Names and addresses of appellants will become part of the public record.

Appeals must conform to the requirements of Section 9 of the procedures. A copy of the Optional Appeal procedures may be found online at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/applit/includes/PlanAppealProceduresDuringTransition.pdf>.

Implementation

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, the forest plan will be amended as outlined in alternative 1 (EA, appendix A) on or after the 5th business day following the appeal period. When appeals are filed, the forest plan will be amended on or after the 15th business day following the last appeal disposition.

For further information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Audrey Kuykendall, Acting Planning/Minerals Staff Officer at (575) 758-6212 or akuykendall@fs.fed.us.



KENDALL CLARK
Forest Supervisor
Carson National Forest

February 24, 2012

Date

Project Record Index
Forest Plan Amendment for Fire Management on the Carson
National Forest

PR No.	Doc Date	Document Description	Source	Recipient
001	9/30/1986	Environmental Impact Statement for Carson NF Land and Resource Management Plan (LMP)	USDA Forest Service	
002	10/31/1986	Record of Decision for Carson NF LMP	USDA Forest Service	
003	11/1/1986	Carson National Forest LMP, with amendments 1 through 13 (folder)	USDA Forest Service	
004	1/10/2003	Directives: Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 5109.9 Fire Management Analysis and Planning Handbook (folder)	USDA Forest Service	
005	6/17/2005	Directives: Forest Service Manual (FSM) 1500 Fire Management	USDA Forest Service	
006	9/21/2007	List: Regional Forester's Sensitive Species List for the Southwestern Region	USDA Forest Service Regional Forester	
007	3/31/2008	Memo: Withdrawal of fire management plans on the Apache-Sitgreaves, Carson, Lincoln, and Tonto NFs	USDA Forest Service Regional Forester	USDA Forest Service Forest Supervisors
008	4/2/2008	Memo: Withdrawal of Carson NF's fire management plan	USDA Forest Service Carson Forest Supervisor	USDA Forest Service Regional Forester
009	4/17/2008	Media: "Forest Service scraps 4 fire plans challenged by enviro groups"	April Reese, Land Letter	
010	1/31/2009	Letter: Scoping Proposed Forest Plan Amendment for Fire Management on the Carson NF, with mailing list (folder)	USDA Forest Service - Carson NF Forest Supervisor	Mailing list
011	2/17/2009	List: Regional Forester's Sensitive Species List for the Carson National Forest	USDA Forest Service Forest Biologist	

Decision Notice for the Wildland Fire Management Amendment to the Carson Forest Plan

PR No.	Doc Date	Document Description	Source	Recipient
012	4/1/2009	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Forest Plan Amendment Proposal for Fire Management on the Carson NF, with mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
013	4/8/2009	Letter: Comments on 1/31/2009 scoping letter	Joanie Berde, Carson Forest Watch	USDA Forest Service Carson NF Forest Supervisor
014	4/9/2009	Memo: Updated guidance for implementation of Federal wildland fire management policy	USDA Forest Service Chief	USDA Forest Service Regional Foresters
015	4/24/2009	Email: Resending of proposed fire amendment scoping letter to NM Environment Department for comment (sent to wrong address)	USDA Forest Service NM Liaison w/ NMED	USDA Forest Service Carson NF IDT Leader
016	5/1/2009	Letter: Comments on 1/31/2009 scoping letter	Bryan Bird, WildEarth Guardians	USDA Forest Service Carson NF Forest Supervisor
017	6/3/2009	Letter: Agency comments on 1/31/2009 scoping letter	NM Environment Dept Review Coordinator	USDA Forest Service Carson NF Forest Supervisor
018	7/1/2009	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Forest Plan Amendment Proposal for Fire Management on the Carson NF, with mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
019	7/7/2009	Letter: Tribal comments on 1/31/2009 scoping letter. Concluded the proposed undertaking/project area will not impact any Navajo traditional cultural properties.	Navajo Nation, Supervisory Anthropologist	USDA Forest Service Carson NF Forest Supervisor
020	10/1/2009	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Forest Plan Amendment Proposal for Fire Management on the Carson NF, with mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
021	12/1/2009	Conversation Record: Regarding forest plan amendment proposal for fire management on the Carson NF and effects on heritage resources	USDA Forest Service Carson NF IDT Leader	Kelly Francis Heritage Preservation Officer, Navajo

Decision Notice for the Wildland Fire Management Amendment to the Carson Forest Plan

PR No.	Doc Date	Document Description	Source	Recipient
				Nation
022	1/1/2010	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Forest Plan Amendment Proposal for Fire Management on the Carson NF, with mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
023	4/1/2010	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Forest Plan Amendment Proposal for Fire Management on the Carson NF, with mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
024	4/30/2010	Memo: Terminology Updates Resulting from Release of the Guidance for the Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2009)	National Wildfire Coordinating Group	
025	7/1/2010	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Forest Plan Amendment Proposal for Fire Management on the Carson NF, with mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
026	10/1/2010	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Forest Plan Amendment Proposal for Fire Management on the Carson NF, with mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
027	12/1/2010	IDT meeting notes: Discussion of purpose and need, proposed action, public scoping results, issues, and EA framework.	USDA Forest Service TEAMS D. McGlothlin	Record
028	1/1/2011	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Forest Plan Amendment Proposal for Fire Management on the Carson NF, with mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
029	1/19/2011	Analysis: Final scoping content analysis and disposition, based on IDT review and comment.	USDA Forest Service TEAMS D. McGlothlin	Record
030	2/01/2011	Forest Service Policy: Optional appeal procedures during the planning rule transition period	USDA Forest Service	
031	4/1/2011	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Forest Plan Amendment Proposal for Fire Management on the Carson NF, with mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
032	6/3/2011	Biological Assessment (Federally Listed Species) for the Forest Plan Amendment for Fire Management on the Carson National Forest	USDA Forest Service - Carson NF Forest Wildlife Biologist	Record

Decision Notice for the Wildland Fire Management Amendment to the Carson Forest Plan

PR No.	Doc Date	Document Description	Source	Recipient
033	6/3/2011	Biological Evaluation (FS Sensitive Species) for the Forest Plan Amendment for Fire Management on the Carson National Forest	USDA Forest Service - Carson NF Forest Wildlife Biologist	Record
034	7/1/2011	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Forest Plan Amendment Proposal for Fire Management on the Carson NF, with mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
035	9/1/2011	Management Indicator Species Assessment for the Carson National Forest	USDA Forest Service NF	
036	10/1/2011	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Forest Plan Amendment Proposal for Fire Management on the Carson NF, with mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
037	10/5/2011	Forest Service Policy: Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics Implementation Guidelines (Wilderness)	USDA Forest Service	
038	10/5/2011	Checklist: Wilderness Checklist for Fire Management	USDA Forest Service	
039	1/1/2012	Schedule of Proposed Actions: Forest Plan Amendment Proposal for Fire Management on the Carson NF, with mailing lists	USDA Forest Service	
040	2/10/2012	List: Federally threatened, endangered, and candidate listed species for Taos, Rio Arriba, and Colfax counties	USDA Fish & Wildlife Service (website)	
041	2/13/2012	Memo: 2012 Fire Management Plan Update and Wilderness Checklist Incorporation	Forest Service Regional Director of Fire & Aviation Management	Southwestern Region, Forest Supervisors
042	3/1/2012	Environmental Assessment: Forest Plan Amendment for Fire Management on the Carson National Forest	USDA Forest Service - Carson NF	