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Public Engagement Report for the Arizona National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan



Prepared by:

John Titre and Chris Sharp,
Independent Resources
Enterprise Team

Executive Summary

The 800+ mile Arizona National Scenic Trail (AZT) crosses deserts, mountains, and canyons and connects communities on its journey from the Arizona border with Mexico to the Utah state line. In late 2011, the AZT Administrator and Independent Resources Enterprise Team (InRe) designed a public engagement process that involved Federal, State, and local agencies, AZT partners, the Arizona Trail Association (ATA), user groups, and municipalities to provide input on the comprehensive management plan (CMP).

Public Engagement Objectives

- Create understanding of the opportunities, trends, and challenges facing the AZT;
- Engage citizens in a dialogue around what should be addressed by the CMP; and
- Build trust with partners and stakeholders for implementing the CMP.

Accomplishments

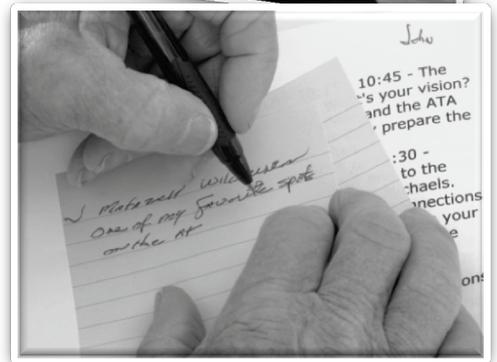
- Conducted four workshops in Flagstaff, Payson, Superior, and Tucson (78 people);
- Conducted two workshops at ATA meetings;
- Analyzed 45 public comments from the Web site;
- Met with 12 Federal, State, and local agencies to discuss public workshop and coordination; and
- Completed sensing¹ with nearly 50 individuals.



Sensing Findings (Appendix A)

Uniqueness

- The AZT is a source of pride and identity for Arizonans;
- It represents the natural and cultural character of Arizona;
- It is a multi-use trail with hikers, bikers, and equestrians using it with minimal conflict; and
- Although mostly rugged, it has less remote segments.



Challenges

- The post-completion challenge now is primarily maintenance and improvements;²
- Agencies lack sufficient and stable maintenance funding; and
- Residential and mining development, energy projects, and other threats.

¹ Sensing involves a conversation around talking points important for discovering insights and ideas as a basis for further dialogue in other formats such as workshops and e-collaboration.

² New construction is needed in some places to get the trail off roads.

Trends

- ATA is respected nationally as a premier volunteer organization;
- The AZT has considerable international tourism potential with evidence of foreign visits;
- Communities such as Patagonia, Superior, Vale, Payson, Oracle, and Flagstaff are fully engaged;
- Mountain biking has increased since the 1990s and the user groups are very organized and growing;
- Quality of life amenities are attracting people to Arizona and communities near the AZT;
- Hiking is inexpensive as compared to organized or spectator sports; and
- There is a lack of awareness of the trail by the public, especially for minorities and youth.

Public Workshop Findings (Appendix B)

Using the 12 items below generated from the sensing exercise “where there is potential management influence,”³ we asked the public: “What do you think should be addressed in the CMP?” Voting resulted in the following ranking of importance:

1. Resource Protection (153)
2. Water Availability (94)
3. Signs (83)
4. Trail Information (maps, brochures) (65)
5. Corridors (60)
6. Education (53)
7. Volunteers (47)
8. Gateway Communities (43)
9. Awareness (42)
10. Cultural and Historic Resources (37)
11. Ecotourism (28)
12. Outreach to Nontraditional Users (7)
13. Route Signing
14. Stewardship⁴



Resource protection, water availability, and the need for signs stand out among the items. The next tier of importance deals with information, corridors, and education. The third tier addresses volunteers, Gateway communities, awareness, and cultural and historic resources. Ecotourism is not far behind while outreach to nontraditional users had the fewest votes.

³ Items from sensing such as the need for maintenance funding were not forwarded to the public workshops as an item to discuss because such items may not necessarily have direct management control and are part of a larger process, i.e., budget allocation.

⁴ Items 13 and 14 were added following the four public workshops.

CMP Recommendations Based on Public Engagement

Desired Conditions for Protecting Resource Values and the Corridor

- Encourage the use of local planning guidelines to protect trail corridors and increase property values (e.g., Pinal County guideline to protect ¼ mile along the AZT corridor);
- Promote wildlife values, and other resources, as a benefit of preserving the AZT corridor;
- Raise the AZT as a priority in the Forest Service among competing resources; and
- Expand the distance for view sheds given the vast expanses of what is visible from the AZT.

Plan Components

- Prepare a concise document that does not require extensive or expensive development, is adaptive, and not overly confining;
- Address capacity issues at high-use locations before they become more difficult to resolve;
- Consider drinking water sources along the AZT;
- Interpret historic and cultural history with natural resource themes of the trail; and
- Discuss a practical means to camp overnight in NPS areas with short notice for thru hikers.



Organizational Directions

- Investigate ways the Forest Service can serve as a catalyst to promote jobs and employment through partner relationship building;
- View the trail as an opportunity to connect with local communities in ways that will enhance agency missions (FS, NPS, BLM) and sustain communities socially and economically;
- Expand membership in ATA to reach out to nontraditional members based on age, gender, income, and ethnic background;
- Work with the ATA Gateway Communities Program to encourage ecotourism; and
- Appoint more ATA Trail Stewards with one for each section and smaller sections.

Concepts that Can Guide the CMP

Based on internal and external engagement, three interdependent concepts are suggested to foster strategic thinking around priorities and contribute to the content of the CMP:

- ***Sustainable Recreation*** to dialogue with local communities about social, economic, and ecological values of the trail;
- ***Systems Thinking*** to view the connections the trail has with other system elements;⁵ and

⁵ System elements can include stakeholders, communities, fiscal resources, constraints, opportunities, success indicators, and other relevant factors affecting the current and future conditions of the Trail.

- **Adaptive Management** to take advantage of “learning by doing” and experimenting.

Public Engagement Strategy Conclusions

The public engagement strategy adopted here was based on three levels of public engagement: (1) initial sensing to determine the “sideboards” for the public workshops, (2) facilitated workshops to prioritize⁶ what belongs in the CMP, and (3) e-collaboration for stakeholders to respond to focused questions and provide more detail on the total effort. Each resulted in a higher level of detail useful to the CMP and a platform for further public scoping.

Public comments following the workshops, after-action reviews with district rangers, and press coverage indicate the collaboration strategy met the public engagement objectives of creating understanding, engaging the public, and building trust. This achieves the spirit of collaboration as defined here:

A mutually beneficial relationship based on an inclusive process where people work together to achieve an outcome they can't achieve alone to create a future that they can all live with.

However, not all demographic segments of the population were represented through the public engagement strategy. The primary segments included in the engagement were people with considerable experience with the AZT. Future public scoping should consider outreach to a wider audience using other means such as focus groups to include those less likely to participate in traditional forms of civic engagement.

Next Steps in the CMP Process

Leadership support is needed to make the trail a priority with staff time to:

- Gather supporting information
 - Existing NEPA decisions and special use permits
 - ID significant resources
 - Existing conditions
 - Foreseeable threats
- Define the purpose and need
- Prepare the draft CMP
- Begin the NEPA process
- Continue to work with partners

Leadership Learning “Pearls”

Two key messages for leadership were revealed in the course of this effort:

- The trail is one of the best examples of what we can do with partners;
- It connects communities with jobs and promotes Forest Service goodwill;

⁶ The Nominal Group Technique was used with ballots and 5 votes for each of the 12 workshop items.

Introduction and Background

The 800+ mile Arizona Trail was designated a National Scenic Trail in the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009.

The Arizona National Scenic Trail crosses many jurisdictions:

- U.S. Forest Service, 72.9 percent
- Arizona State Land Department, 11.1 percent
- Bureau of Land Management, 7.3 percent
- National Park Service, 5 percent
- County/Municipal, 2.1 percent
- Private, 1.1 percent
- Arizona State Parks, 0.5 percent

The Secretary of Agriculture is charged with the overall administration of the AZT, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and appropriate State, tribal, and local governmental agencies (Sec. 5 (a) National Trails System Act, P.L. 90-543, as amended through P.L. 111-11). The Forest Service is the lead agency. The act requires completion of a CMP to include, but is not be limited to:



- Specific objectives and practices to be observed in the management of the trail;
- The identification of all significant natural, historical, and cultural resources to be preserved;
- Details of cooperative agreements with other entities;
- Trail carrying capacity and implementation plan;
- An acquisition or protection plan for all lands to be acquired; and
- General and site-specific development plans including costs.

CMP Process

The Southwestern Region of the Forest Service is leading the CMP process. The CMP is a programmatic and strategic document intended to guide management of the AZT corridor and amend or revise land management plans for the Coronado, Tonto, Coconino, and Kaibab National Forests. Because construction of the AZT is complete, the focus of the CMP is on management and protection of the trail and its resources. The CMP process has 10 steps:

- Step 1** Develop pre-plan agreements with partner agencies.
- Step 2** Gather data, contact agencies, engage the public through workshops and e-collaboration.
- Step 3** Define purpose and need/develop proposed action.
- Step 4** Conduct public scoping.
- Step 5** Prepare draft plan/environmental document.
- Step 6** Identify environmental impacts and select preferred alternative.
- Step 7** Conduct a public review of draft plan/environmental document.
- Step 8** Conduct an analysis of the public comment.
- Step 9** Prepare final plan/decision document.

Step 10 Release a final plan/decision document to the public.

Purpose and Objectives for Public Engagement in the CMP Process

The purpose of the public engagement process was to contact people familiar with the trail and take advantage of their experience in developing items that should belong in the CMP. This report documents the first phase leading to the development of a proposed action and a draft CMP/environmental document. This phase of public engagement is primarily addressed in steps 2 and 4 of the “CMP Process.”

Designation of the Arizona Trail as a National Scenic Trail created an opportunity to build public support and trust. The spirit of the New Planning Rule for land management plans, as an approach to planning, calls for early public engagement. There are good indications that support and trust has increased as demonstrated by press coverage, comments from the ATA, and from those attending public workshops.⁷

Public Engagement Through Collaboration

Public involvement is often viewed as part of NEPA requirements to keep the public informed while the responsible official acts according to law, regulation, and policy. Collaboration, on the other hand, goes beyond informing and is the fourth level as part of the “Spectrum of Public Involvement” (below) where participants co-create a future they can all live with.⁸ We prefer to call this a “public engagement process” and use of the phrase “engaging our publics” as the mantra for collaboration.

It can be further defined as a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship based on an inclusive process through which people work together. Often, it involves addressing some place that people care about to achieve an outcome they can’t achieve alone.

Spectrum of Public Involvement

- **Inform:** meet with representatives and provide or exchange information.
- **Consult:** obtain feedback from a broad array of stakeholders while retaining decisionmaking authority.
- **Engage:** implies a more active partnership with citizens to propose solutions, choose priorities, jointly evaluate feedback; does not involve sharing decision power.
- **Collaborate:** *seeks consensus recommendations and invites citizens into a shared responsibility for decisions and implementation, it means to “co-labor” to achieve common goals or something everyone can live with (not the same as coordinate, cooperate, or communicate which are sometimes used)*⁹.
- **Empower:** involves stakeholders and citizens in the decision process¹⁰.

⁷ Evidence here is anecdotal. While an “after action process” followed each workshop, a formal evaluation with empirical evidence did not occur. Since many ATA members observed the process over 6 months, they could be queried and part of an evaluation process if leadership so desired.

⁸ From the International Association of Public Participation.

⁹ A spirit of common ground is sought among those participating resulting in collective stewardship through implementation of on-the-ground activities.

¹⁰ This level is seldom used and may violate law, regulation, and policy as well as FACA restrictions.

Process Design Strategy for Collaboration

Three levels of collaboration were used to achieve the study objectives:

Table 1. Levels of collaboration

Collaborative Tool	Purpose
Sensing	Listening to people’s concerns about what is important to them
Public Workshops	Engaging in a dialogue around what belongs in the plan
E-collaboration	Providing greater detail and focus on plan components

The collaboration tools can be seen as filters that capture a portion of the collaborative “pie.” The first filter, sensing, used personal and phone interviews to identify what should be addressed in the CMP. This generated themes that were moved to a finer level of discourse through public workshops. Giving workshop participants a list of items to talk about and add to was a better use of time for attendees and led to higher quality outcomes. In contrast, opening up the discussion without sideboards would have left the dialogue at a coarser level with less likelihood of a useful and practical outcome. The third filter, e-collaboration, is much finer and is a continuation of sensing. Through e-collaboration, people who have a strong connection to the AZT were able to provide detailed comments and identify specific actions such as where erosion is a problem and where more water bars are needed. Thus, these three filters produced coarse to finer grain results that are both rapid and indepth.

While these collaborative tools are not exhaustive, there is a point where similar patterns of information are repeated. As this occurs, saturation is reached. Additional means of gathering information yield fewer and fewer results at a higher cost. The tools described above provided an adequate and reasonable means of gathering quality information and feedback in a manner that was cost effective and efficient. However, this does not mean the public engagement process ends. Indeed, it remains ongoing and evolves as information and perspectives change.

In addition, the AZT administrator and one district rRanger participated in other collaborative efforts that included government-to-government meetings and an ATA Executive Workshop since the partnership aspect of implementing actions is vital to success given the length of the trail, and the communities and forests that it crosses.

Below is the strategic design process with the dates when the different phases were used:

Sensing (September through April, 2012)

- With Arizona Trail Association (ATA) members
- With Different User Groups
 - a) Equestrian
 - b) Mountain Bikers
 - c) Hikers
- With Arizona Partner Agencies
 - a) BLM
 - b) NPS
 - c) Counties



Public and Partner Workshops

- Special Places Mapping Exercise with All Trail Users (February 4, 2012)
- Nominal Group Technique with ATA Executive Leadership (March 3, 2012)
- Public Workshops
 - a) Tucson (March 12, 2012)
 - b) Superior (March 13, 2012)
 - c) Payson (March 14, 2012)
 - d) Flagstaff (March 15, 2012)



E-Collaboration (March 15 through May 11)

Collaboration Results

Each response from the three levels of collaboration represents a unique viewpoint that would be difficult to condense into an individual theme. Simple frequency analysis does not allow for the context and modifiers of importance. For example, one of the most frequent words in the comments is “border.” In the positive questions (e.g., what is really neat...), border is mentioned as an opportunity to traverse border to border. In the concerns questions, it represents security issues. So a more subjective analysis was applied to the comments to classify groupings and themes that are significant and shared. A complete listing of responses is contained in the following appendices:

- Appendix A: Sensing
- Appendix B: Public Workshops
- Appendix C: E-collaboration explanation (not responses)
- Appendix D: Spatial Workshop

Sensing

The purpose of sensing was to understand what makes the AZT really unique; the existing conditions, trends, and stressors that might impact social, economic, and ecological sustainability; and to surface the good ideas that will contribute toward sustainability. Sensing is a participatory research approach that gives voice to the public and shows that the Forest Service cares enough to meet with individuals and listen to their ideas and concerns.

Sensing was conducted in two segments. First, about 10 days (including weekends) were devoted to meeting with people from Patagonia to Fredonia. This was conducted rapidly and included conversations with ATA members, hikers, bikers, equestrians, and organized groups. Effort was made to create a diverse sample by asking: What are we missing in terms of user groups, gender, age, income levels, education, etc.? As such, this is a non-probability sample which means that standard statistical procedures are inappropriate. The aim is to understand context and not to generalize to the population.

The second segment consisted of asking the same questions of district rangers and other agencies such as the National Park Service, BLM, community officials, and the Arizona Department of Tourism, Community Relations staff.

The outcome of this process was to develop a mutual understanding of the needs on the ground and the distinctive role the agency has for meeting those needs through preparation of the CMP.

Sensing Questions and Key Themes

The questions focused around the main idea of “What does the Forest Service need to consider as we craft a comprehensive management plan?” The key themes are based on responses from all participants.

The sensing approach started with a conversation about what makes the AZT unique and what to share with someone who had never visited the trail. It then moved challenges, solutions, how agencies cooperate, trends, and other ideas that surfaced in the course of the conversation.

Public Workshop Results

Public workshops were held in Tucson, Superior, Payson, and Flagstaff. Each workshop was from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. and held in libraries, hotel conference rooms, and high schools. Public outreach notices were posted using flyers and press releases were sent to appropriate news outlets. Participation ranged from 12 to 28 with a total of 78 attendees over the 4-day period.

The workshop had three parts. First, the district ranger welcomed the attendees and presented information on the existing condition. Next, the AZT Administrator explained the planning process. Third, the collaboration specialist/facilitator explained the engagement process.

Attendees formed groups for a small group exercise around the 12 items of interest for the CMP. Following a discussion, ballots were distributed and everyone voted on their highest priorities. They were allowed to add new items of interest to the CMP. Table 2 displays the results.

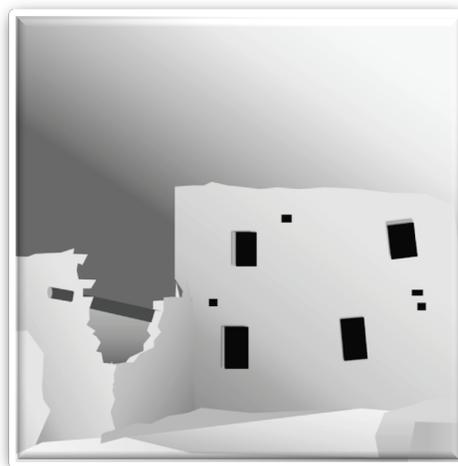
Table 2: Public workshop summary

Ideas	Totals	Rank
Resource Protection	153	1
Corridors	60	5
Awareness	42	10
Water	94	2
Outreach to Nontraditional Users	7	
Ecotourism	28	
Cultural and Historic Resources	37	
Volunteers	47	7
Gateway Communities	43	9
Signs	83	3
Education	53	6
Trail Information (maps, brochures)	65	4
The following two items were added because they had more than one entry at the workshops		
Route Signing	8	
Stewardship	2	

E-Collaboration Results

Concurrent with a public scoping for the CMP, an online questionnaire tool was launched. The online questionnaire was a simple Google™ doc's application with questions mirroring the normative question technique used in the public scoping meetings. The location of the online tool was shared at the public meetings via information cards with the Web address <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/az-trail> which linked to both Forest Service information about the AZT and the questions. Access to the questions was also publicized in the ATA Web page. The Web page also received mention in an article about the public meeting published in The Payson Roundup newspaper; <http://www.paysonroundup.com/news/2012/apr/13/arizona-trail-could-boost-rim-tourism/>

The online tool used the template provided in Google docs for public use. Combinations of question types were used to capture the public knowledge and interest in the AZT. Four open-ended questions were used to allow for all manner of input from respondents:



- *What is really neat about the Arizona Trail that you would share with someone?*
- *Can you think of a name or phrase that best describes the trail?*
- *What should be addressed in the Arizona Trail Comprehensive Plan?*
- *Are there locations on the trail that need improvement or change?*

The open-ended response field for these questions allowed participants to include multiple answers to each of these questions as well as skip questions they did not want to answer. A fifth question; **“What is your primary use (anticipated use) of the trail”** was used to segment answers from hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian user groups. An “other” field, limited to 50 characters, was provided if respondents wanted to add something not covered in the questions. Name and contact information questions concluded the form to allow for future contact. The contact fields were not required input so that participants could choose to remain anonymous.

A link to the form was available on the AZT web site for participants to access. The output was recorded in spreadsheet format in a password protected online database. The tool became active March 13, 2012 and was downloaded for analysis May 11, 2012.

A total of 45 comments were collected from unique respondents. Not all fields were completed by all respondents. However, no question or field was disproportionately affected by selective response. The open-ended nature of the response field resulted in both narrative type and bulleted responses for many of the questions. The type of response and format do not lend to a simple quantitative analysis; however, in conjunction with the normative process from the public meetings, some trends and patterns emerged.



The first question asked was: **“What is really neat about the Arizona Trail that you would share with someone?”** This produced responses from all participants and produced significant themes. The responses were informally positive, as the question would suggest. However, the range of reasons for user participation represented a spectrum of positive social, cultural, and natural values.

Variety of ecosystems, terrain, and landscape were widely recognized as attributes to the trail. The opportunity to experience the spectrum of landscape between lowland desert and mountain forest impressed the respondents. The repeated mention of scenic wonder fits into this theme and was present in most responses.

The variety of opportunity available on the Arizona Trail was a common theme for the first question. This variety refers to opportunity in trail difficulty, trip length, and the access type (bike, hike, equestrian). Many users expressed an appreciation of the diversity the trail brings together; that user types

can share access and share experience on a multi-use trail. The potential for multiday hikes along with day hike access was an attribute for the trail.

The third most common sentiment was the trail experience as an adventure/lifetime achievement. The recognition of the experience having a long-term effect on perceptions and values was what they wanted to share about the trail. This was also expressed as a bequest value, to share the trail experience with children and grandchildren. A strong bond with other users, from shared experience, was a significant value.

The predominant themes of variety, access, and shared experience coincide well with participants in the public scoping meetings. Respondents all shared positive perceptions about the Arizona Trail and listed significant value for the trail's existence and their experience with it.

The second question on the online questionnaire was: **“Can you think of a name or phrase that best describes the trail?”** This is a direct repeat of a question asked in the public meetings, an attempt to get at a distilled perception of the trail and its significance. In effect, participants were making a “Bumper Sticker” statement about the Arizona Trail. As with the first question, themes stood out as repeated and significant, humor was also part of many responses. Beauty, history, and diversity were some of the most repeated terms. Some responses that stood out: The Spine of Arizona, Border to Border, Hike to the Heart of AZ, AZ Top to Bottom, Experience the Real Arizona.

The question: **“What should be addressed in the Arizona Trail Comprehensive Plan?”** This creates a laundry list of both general recommendations for management and specific, local, and short-term needs for the Arizona Trail. Each response represents important recommendations that will require individual response. Issues of maintenance dominate the comments, are mostly place specific, and could be addressed by a trail standard maintenance plan in a comprehensive plan. Water access is a significant concern and deserves review in many areas. Signage was a concern for many experienced trail users, due to its absence in some management areas, and overall inconsistency and need for compatibility with other signage.

Unique and insightful comments also need to be addressed in some fashion in the comprehensive plan. Access issues took many forms in the responses: equestrian access in the form of larger trailheads, stock water, and trail conditions were a common theme and of significant complexity with the trail being multi-use. Along the same lines, alternate routes for mountain bikes outside of wilderness need a place in the plan. Proactive concerns about the long-term protection of the trail route are a concern for respondents. Gateway community relationships with the trail community also represent a proactive opportunity within the comprehensive plan. As each comment submitted to



the questionnaire represents an informed view, they are each valid for review in the comprehensive plan. However, multiple concerns may be addressed in some of the above groupings.

The responses to the online questionnaire correspond to the public meetings' normative exercise (see table 1). The top four concerns "resource protection," water, signs, and trail information are identical in both public-scoping tools. This high level of correlation is indicative of the stakeholders' primary concerns.

"Are there locations on the trail that need improvement or change?" This question mirrors the responses to the previous question. With the addition of a location indicator, the comments address maintenance issues related to water, trail condition, and trailhead access. Postburn restoration is also a concern for some users.

"What is your primary use (anticipated use) of the trail?" These results are simply instructive. All the primary user groups are represented with hikers being dominant, mountain biking second, and equestrian third. This is the same distribution observed on trail sections. A few individuals identified themselves as birders and trail builders, indicating a more specialized interest.

The online tool is still collecting information and input from the interested public. Numerous stand-alone comments exist that bear attention such as: collaboration ideas with gateway communities, security concerns, and conflict with other users. However, these individual observations can be included in comprehensive planning tools to a great degree.

The input from all the participants to the online questionnaire is a short list of specific concerns from stakeholders. These comments are not normalized or quantified to show a relative ranking of priorities. However, the aggregation of a number of the comments produces a few actionable themes. The support from participants for the Arizona Trail is overwhelmingly positive. The comprehensive plan needs to address a number of functional complexities in the trail's maintenance and upkeep, and a desire for a consistent level of maintenance exists. Improvements that would make access easier, water more accessible, and information available would be appreciated by most users. Finally, the trail is a multi-use trail with access needs for all users needing to be considered.

Concepts to Guide the CMP

Integrating and reflecting on the findings and recommendations, we offer three concepts that may further guide the CMP and better address the purpose and need statement. These are sustainable recreation, systems thinking, and adaptive management.

Sustainable Recreation

The "Framework for Sustainable Recreation" includes a vision, principles, and focus areas. The intent is to foster understanding and further the contribution and influence of recreation on forest and community sustainability.

Sustainable recreation contributes to development of the CMP and management of the AZT in the following ways:

- Focuses on relationships between sites, trails, special uses, heritage, and wilderness;
- Helps achieve ecological, social, and economic sustainability objectives;
- Provides strategic guidance to plan for trail improvements that contribute to sustainability;
- Helps leverage resources to increase volunteerism, stewardship, and partnerships; and
- Promotes benefits to rural economies and improves community viability.

Systems Thinking

The key words for systems thinking are “interdependent” and “unified whole.” By seeing the whole, we become expansive in our thinking rather than reductive and, thus, more capable of seeing patterns over time. Systems’ thinking is proactive and circular in nature, as opposed to linear thinking, which tends to be reactive.

Key highlights of systems thinking:

- Sees the whole picture;
- Looks for interdependencies;
- Pays attention and gives voice to the long term;
- “Goes wide” (uses peripheral vision) to see complex cause and effect relationships;
- Finds where unanticipated consequences emerge; and
- Holds the tension of competing ideas without trying to resolve it quickly.

Benefits of systems thinking:

- Develop new ways of looking at old problems;
- Integrate new information more easily;
- See interrelationships and cause and effect more clearly; and
- Develop patience with implementing change and tolerating delays.



Adaptive Management

Adaptive management is a systematic and iterative approach for improving resource management by emphasizing learning from management outcomes.

- Focuses on learning by doing, through partnerships of managers, scientists, and other stakeholders who learn together how to create and maintain sustainable ecosystems;
- Helps resource managers maintain flexibility in their decisions, embracing uncertainties;
- Provides managers the latitude to change direction;
- Can improve understanding of ecological systems to achieve management objectives;
- Takes action to improve progress toward desired future conditions; and

- Is grounded in dialogue and learning as part of a joint journey with the Forest Service and community.

Conclusions

This engagement process initially focused on those individuals most familiar with the AZT to include hikers, bikers, and equestrians. It progressed to government officials and then stakeholders through public workshops. It culminated in Web-based input that still continues today. The process provided a rapid assessment of perceptions, ideas, and a discussion of what should be addressed and, thus, belongs in the CMP. The engagement did not include outreach to groups not familiar with the AZT, primarily because the purpose was to gather information from trail users and stakeholders.

The process revealed many items that seemed intuitive and they are now documented. Other outcomes included a stronger relationship between the ATA and the Forest Service, the awareness that both can be a catalyst in rural economic growth related to the AZT, and that more outreach is needed to nontraditional groups to build greater support for the AZT and further contribute to its sustainability.

Thus, a foundation is in place for the next phase in preparation of the CMP and the NEPA process. This information will lead to a more focused discussion and a higher quality dialogue not only for the segments contacted but for those yet unaware of the AZT and how it can enrich social, economic, and ecological outcomes for a better Arizona.

Appendix A

What is really unique about the AZT?

- History of the area goes through much diversity and the entire state
- Longest trail in the state
- Goes through many life zones, ecosystems
- It is part of our identity and the pride of Arizona and represents the state well
- The concept of a through trail is unique
- Awesome resource
- Ruggedness
- All three users generally get along
- Communities have different values and perceptions along the trail
- It was created by volunteers
- Different parts of the trail provide different experiences
- The trail is a “Travel Log of Arizona”
- Can be hiked year round
- Has opportunities for all ability levels
- Something to brag about when you are done
- It is a quality of life attraction for Arizona (people move to Tucson because of the trails)
- The ideal of being a true multiple use trail
- Provides a spiritual experience
- Can provide a real learning moment for individuals, families, kids
- The whole trail can mostly be done by day hiking
- Has variety across natural, cultural (Native American), historic (mining), landscape, physical
- The trail is also an important wildlife corridor
- Few states have such a diversity of climates (six climate zones that you could not experience anywhere)

What are some of the challenges?

- Awareness: many people do not know about it.
- More stewards are needed, one for each segment.
- Union Pacific Lines (transmission lines)
- ADOT corridor
- Land corridors, State Trust Land
- Mining (need to move the trail)
- Some Federal managers are difficult to deal with (e.g. Grand Canyon National Park)
- Funding for trail maintenance (all soft funded now)
- Minorities don’t know that it exists
- Fifteen foot right-of-way is too small
- More use and degradation
- Toilet facilities (solution: need bathrooms where it crosses roads)
- Natural disasters like fire
- One small miscalculation related to the water source can be a problem
- Town managers really don’t get the tourism connection

- Protecting corridor where it crosses state lands
- The segments are too long for one steward, 5 miles is best
- Drought and climate change
- Importance for wildlife is overlooked
- Babbit Ranch is a strategic place that needs attention
- There are hazards and sudden storms, needs more publicity for safety especially at higher elevations
- Some places the slope is greater than 15 percent
- Erosion and maintenance
- Has some congestion, capacity issues
- Some bikers go too fast and do not pay attention to slower uses like horses (many of them are not members of an organized group)
- Loosing acreage in some places
- There is little room for horse rigs
- There are certain areas where horses can't go
- Maintaining hard to access locations (2 hours hiking is the maximum)
- The State Land Office has no concept of recreation (solution: someone needs to talk to them)
- Encroachment from housing by Tucson
- 27 miles with no water is too long
- OHV use is a minor threat
- How to prioritize work on trail for maintenance
- There was much excitement about building the trail, but doing the less exciting work of maintaining it may be different
- Solar and wind development
- Small towns do not have the wherewithal to carry off the marketing strategy and they look to ATA

What are some of the solutions?

- ATA needs to step up social marketing
- Need to work with Chambers of Commerce
- Need standard signs
- Need designated camping
- Need more places for water
- Need interpretive signs
- Need to develop heritage tourism better
- Need a marketing plan to sell and promote the trail
- Need a display at the airport
- Need to restart some of the springs
- Need to alter biking use on a case-by-case basis
- Need to educate bikers and horse riders about etiquette
- Need to preserve corridors and view sheds
- Need to reroute parts on roads
- Need to develop “niche markets” like bird watching, star gazing, global tourism, etc.
- Need to promote to lower and middle income families
- Need more billboard advertising
- Need to establish campsites like at 8 mile intervals
- Need to do something with ADOT, better communication or a contact

- Need to build coalitions with cattle people, they have leverage
- Need to create a hub visitor center near population centers
- There is a potential for shelters along the trail
- From a sustainability standpoint: do it right the first time
- Don't want to see it like the Appalachian Trail, needs to stay wild
- Use available stock tanks and make agreements with ranchers to guarantee water sources
- Need some kind of shuttle service
- We need to be cautious about how we advertise the trail
- Ecotourism and conservation is a better solution than mining and more sustainable too
- Get the State to exchange lands with BLM and the Forest Service
- Change the State Constitution (legislation) with regards to the trail
- Allow jurisdictions to purchase corridor land at fair market value
- Need to sit down with the governor
- Planning and zoning commissions need to keep low density development near the trail
- Use money from Lodgers tax to fund the trail
- No carsonite signs
- Steward all need to work more often
- Provide viable single-track alternatives
- Sell hat pins at each Gateway Community
- Development should not happen within 1,000 feet of the trail
- Pinal County created a zoning ordinance to protect the corridor one-eighth mile on either side (good example for other counties)
- Make use of Twitter, Face book, and social marketing

How are the agencies cooperating?

- Some agencies are great, but there are personalities and much turnover
- Agencies have good cooperation
- BLM is progressive and open
- Pima County is excellent to work with
- 95 percent of the users have no idea how well it all works with the agencies cooperating
- The State land boards are tough to work with
- Agencies are not consistent
- Forest Service is excellent to work with
- BLM is a little slower
- NPS is pretty good, but it depends on the superintendent
- Each ranger district has their own way of doing things

What are some of the trends?

- Getting more through hikers
- Mainly hearty souls use it now, little day use
- Seeing more people in areas where they were not in the past
- As it becomes better known it will attract more people from out of state
- Trail is well known in the Gateway Communities
- Not many people are going to hike the whole trail
- Sierra Vista is growing and has more hiking groups
- There is a day hike trend
- Growth and impact on San Pedro River

- People are not driving as far
- See more Germans hiking
- There are few conflicts, people spread out
- Mountain bikers tend to be 35–45 age group, affluent
- Mountain bikers are into more technical “hot dogging”
- Development may start up again so this is a good time to lock some things in place like the corridor issue
- Eventually as economy improves, this will become a destination for trail users
- Many towns are looking for an economic connection, Pine and Strawberry are struggling
- There will be more impacts as growth happens

Do you have any thoughts for what belongs in the comp plan?

- Do everything in three dimensional space (trail to address natural and cultural areas, people to address volunteers, and government/corporate to address management and funding)
- Need to monitor thresholds for species, vegetation
- Need to address appropriate behaviors
- Keep the plan simple and easy to understand

Appendix B: Public Workshop Results

What is really neat about the Arizona Trail that you would share with someone?

My favorite place in AZ.

Provides multi-use access for hiking, mountain bikes, and equestrians and the ability to see living history of the AZ west and experience the variety of the Sonoran Desert to the ponderosa pine forest.

I attended the workshop at Desert Sky School, Tucson, AZ. We did a workshop asking these questions.

The varied climates, topography, beauty, and incredible diversity of life and vegetation along the 817 miles of trail make it special and unique.

The wild and remote nature of the trail and the fact that it includes many different climatic zones plus you can hike, bike, or ride it.

Vast expanses, built with LOVE, beautifully maintained. Peaceful and challenging.

The diversity of landscapes.

I think it's great that the AZT goes through remote wilderness areas, as well as coming close to some major cities making it accessible. I really like that it accommodates mountain bikes and horses on many sections allowing so many types of recreation. It goes through some unique ecosystems, from saguaros to ponderosa pine.

It's my first choice when wanting to go out for a quick hike or mountain bike in the wilds near my home in Vail.

While the AZT is a mixed bag—some really awesome sections, some OK, and some awful—overall it is outstanding. Most of the new stuff is just outstanding. I consider this trail a real gem.

The AT is an important state legacy that showcases Arizona's diverse ecosystems that must be preserved. Hiking the AT enriches those who hike and backpack through its individual segments and its entirety.

I have hiked over 700 miles of the AZT. I have enjoyed spending time in some wilderness and mountainous areas that I didn't know existed in Arizona. Thanks to the AZT, I've explored parts of AZ that most people never know.

It's the best thing about Arizona. It means a lot to me.

It offers about every challenge that AZ can throw at it with mountains, views, flat land, and historical sites.

It showcases all of Arizona's different and varied terrain, climates, and natural beauty. It displays much of the best that Arizona has to offer in one contiguous trail from border to border.

It goes from border to border, crosses the Grand Canyon, and is already complete (unlike some other long distance national scenic trails). It is multi-use (hiking/running, mountain biking and equestrian).

I had the best vacation of my life riding my bike on AZT from Parker Lake to Picket Post and plan to come back to complete the trail to Utah. The AZT gave me a lifetime experience.

It spans the entire length of the state. Nearly all of it allows mountain bikes, and it is primarily single track.

It provides a legal, continuous access to beautiful country. It's border to border. It provides opportunities to hike in all seasons.

I love to ride my mountain bike on the trail. The first time I was taken out I fell in love with the beauty of the desert I remember from a child that is getting harder to find.

It's awesome to have a continuous trail that is so diverse, with so many faces.

Great scenery and it is all free to use, and vast number of climate to choose from no matter where I am.

I love the diversity of the trail as it meanders from desert to mountain and back. In most passages, it is a wilderness experience...there are few people that one runs into, and the roughness of the route makes for a sense of adventure (one that I could have done less with!).

A big challenge!

That it is well marked (at least the southern 200 miles!) only 800 miles not 2,000 like some of the others and has crazy cool views most of the way!!!

The adventure of long-distance hiking is appealing to me and I long dreamt of doing the Pacific Crest or the Continental Divide. The AZT is a good first step toward those goals and it's in my back yard.

I enjoy experiencing the scenic back country of Arizona and its wide variety from the back of my horse on the trail. The fact that it is one continuous link from border to border across the state is neat and I endeavor to traverse the whole trail in my lifetime. I have completed about 55 miles of it so far on horseback.

It is a wilderness experience.

That it goes from one end to the other, border to border and it crosses all different type of terrain.

“When I heard about the trail in around 1998, I knew I wanted to hike the entire length. There are so many neat things about the passages I've already hiked that it's hard to choose. The just-completed part of the trail between Battle Axe Road and Picket Post Trailhead is a great, scenic section with both history and Sonoran Desert views. A friend and I hiked the uncompleted section back in 1998.

Besides that, I've spent the most time in the Superstitions and Mazatzal passages, some of the most scenic in the state, and also some of the most remote. Before the Willow Fire, the whole stretch of the Mazatzal Divide Trail was stupendous: Windsor Seep, Horse Camp Seep, Hopi Spring, the Park, and more. Now, Hopi is gone, and the burn reaches to within 50 yards of Horse Camp Seep. But the beauty is still there, even buried under 8–16 inches of snow, as it was this March.

If luck holds, I intend to day-hike the portion of the trail just north of the Grand Canyon in a couple of weeks. Friends and I hiked much of the section south of Jacob Lake several years ago, but had to dump out near the park boundary when one of our parties got blisters. This year, I hope to finish the trail to the North Kaibab trailhead. (Since I did a rim-to-rim on the South to North Kaibab trails, I intend to count that as hiking the AZT).

So, short version, experiencing the whole trail has become a life project for me. So far, I've hiked and biked about a third of the trail. Planning to see it keeps me going.

Great place to hike and get outdoors.

The AZ Trail is the crown jewel for Arizona Hiking.

The trail is an opportunity at my door step, a challenge for my body and soul and a call from the wild saying, "Come and try me if you dare!"

I hiked the section of trail in Mt. Lemon that trail shares with the Oracle Ridge last week. When passing through a high mountain saddle a storm broke through and it looked as though a levee had failed allowing all the water held at higher elevations to push through. The clouds rolling through looked like rolling waves crashing into surf, it was miraculous.

It provides a great enlightenment in discovering the vast diversity of Arizona's environment, both within individual segments and from segment to segment.

As a hike leader for Heritage Highlands Hiking Club in Marana, we incorporated the AZ Trail into our Jan-April hiking season and accomplished our goal of completing the southern 12 segments from Mexico to Oracle. All were done as day hikes. It took some logistical planning and a few long days but well worth it. It was great to share this experience with a core group of eight hikers.

My individual goal is to complete the remaining segments this year as "DAY" hikes. Not only will this be a tremendous scenic experience, but if successful will provide a real sense of personal achievement.

It means being out with God and Nature. When I am out with my family/friends/fellow hikers-backpackers, I can appreciate all the hard work that went into the building of the trail, being able to use the AST because of someone else.

We are full-time recreation vehicle users (20 years) (we are home wherever we are parked) and we are members of several trail associations. We've also done trail work on several trails all over the USA.

Trails, national parks and forest and state parks are important to everyone for all our future generations.....my kids, grandkids, great-grand kids... If we don't save them they will be gone.

This trail more than any other thing in my opinion showcases the full diversity of our great state. The sections located on the Coconino are a major part of that showcase.

The Arizona Wilderness Trail has made it possible for me to see many neat parts of the state that most people will never see. By going out on weekends I have been hiking the 42 segments of the trail. I have gone north to south one day and south to north the next. I have now hiked 1,100 miles on the trail. The vegetation, rock formations, and wildlife have been great. A mama bear with two young cubs, other animals and birds plus too many rattlesnakes have added to the interest. Many pictures have been taken of

the unique AZ countryside. Especially appreciated is the lack of motorbikes, ATCs, paved roads, and other signs of civilization.

Arizona is home to fascinating geology and a variety of ecosystems, from the alpine meadows of Buckskin Mountain and the Kaibab Plateau with their mule deer and elk populations to the Grand Canyon then on to the Sonoran Desert and its many inhabitants which include our state bird, the cactus wren, Gambel's quail, and all the species of reptile.

The trail is well maintained and multi-use.

Having my mom visit Arizona for the first time, we naturally chose several sections in the Santa Rita Mountains to hike and bird watch, as those mountains are internationally renowned for neat birds!

Memories—watching full moon rise through ocotillo forest.

A love of all the outdoors.

Thru-hikers have a very narrow window in spring or fall in order to have enough snow at Mexican border and then in the mountains to the north and to still be cool enough to cross the low desert.

Each passage (section) very different and wonderful.

The vision and effort to take raw land and create an opportunity for lifetime memories to be made with family and friends (with minimum impact to the environment).

A transformative experience that may define ones journey through life.

No matter where you hike, the scenery always is different and each time out creates a unique experience.

Can you think of a name or phrase that best describes the trail?

Travel Arizona Naturally

Arizona Freedom Trail

The Winding Trail

The Discovery Trail

AZ Freedom Trail

The Spine of Arizona

AZ Treck, AZ Connector

817 mile community, the other AT

Something new and different every day

Nature's Highway to the Soul

Hike to the Heart of AZ, Travel the Heart of AZ

Walk AZ, Border to Border

AZT Neat

820 mile walk across AZ

The Canyon awaits you!

Grand views are found along many passages.

The Ravens view of Arizona

A beautiful slice of Arizona

Breathtaking, arduous, and addicting

A truly Western trail in the spirit of the old southwest

The one word I would use to describe the AZT is EXTREME. To hike it, you endure extreme heat, dryness, altitude, Grand Canyon, monsoons, snow.

Wild and woolly

Stupendous!

Celebrate Arizona's Outdoor Spaces!

A challenging diamond in the rough.

Your guide to experience awesome desert beauty.

A true inspiration to anyone who loves the southwest.

I like "The Arizona Scenic Trail"

Spectacular and the result of volunteer effort!

Scenic

The AZT

Beautiful Backcountry!

Some areas are hard to ride.

All areas are hard to leave.

The American Indians had their Trail of Tears, now we all have our Trail of Wonderment.

Pick your scene and hike it.

Route. You can't hike this trail without a GPS or you'll get lost; I think this qualifies it as a route, not a trail.

AZ from top to bottom.

Tremendous diversity from desert lowlands at 2,000 to Alpine mountaintops at 9,000 feet with all the flora and fauna in between.

World class adventure in your back yard.

Experience Arizona's natural wonders.

Spectacular!

The beautiful heart of Arizona!

Wide open

Arizona's healing trail

Purple mountains majesty

Majestic

Arizona Wilderness at its best.

The best way to experience Arizona's ecological diversity and its striking natural beauty.

The Arizona Trail is a good name.

What should be addressed in the Arizona Trail Comprehensive Plan?

Maintaining the concrete water tanks, windmills, spring boxes, dirt tanks, etc., for water sources.

Grading and maintenance of the forest roads on a regular schedule.

Special use permit to allow AZ trail user to camp at the trailhead—really has become difficult for those of us with horse trailers to gain access.

Trailheads are needed that are large enough to park horse trailers and vehicles.

Signs that give trail information and directions.

Water (if possible) for humans and horses (animals).

1. Signage along the trail and highway signs where the state highway intersects with gateway communities and access points.
2. Shelters along the trail like the Appalachia Trail has.
3. Water supply along the trail where possible.

Improving water resources along the trail.

Protecting the trail from future development/impact.

Building nonwilderness trails for mountain bikers.

Eliminating the sections that incorporate roads that are still in use.

Trailhead-to-trailhead shuttles. I am a longtime user of the Superior Hiking Trail, and one of the things that have made that trail so successful is the SHT shuttle that runs on weekends up and down the length of the trail on a scheduled basis. I realize this is not so easy for the AZT due to the lack of a parallel roadway, but perhaps even attempting to get some outfitters to run a shuttle for some selected popular segments could bootstrap the service.

- 1) In cooperation with NPS, we need to finally secure mountain bike access to the Hope Camp Trail segment through Saguaro NP's Rincon Mountain District.

2. We need volunteers to step up to accomplish much needed drainage upkeep and maintenance on all portions of the trail. Its one thing to build the trail, but a larger issue is maintaining it in good shape for posterity.

3. Equestrians need to be reminded to ride in single file so as not to turn the trail into a veritable jeep trail, and to avoid riding immediately alongside the trail tread. As a group they are responsible for much of the tread degradation that has occurred to date.

More sections like the new stuff between Kelvin and Picket Post Trailhead. The new trail along the Gila is outstanding, as is the trail that connects that to the existing trail.

The singlet rack along the gas line (near Antelope Peak) on the other hand, looks half done. What happened?

I have seen the CDT Continental Divide Trail Alliance/Foundation collapse. Heartbreaking. An impossible multi-state model. Learn from its demise. Take note of the success of the CT Colorado Trail organization. I have hiked/backpacked both trails in Colorado. Both could e-communicate better, but the poor CDT could never manage the way it needed to. And admittedly, while I believe in the CDT, I wanted my donations to go to Colorado where I was trekking. Thus, the CT has been easier to justify financially.

Enhance accessibility to day hikers.

Continue efforts at clearing trails which are easily overgrown.

Continue to maintain and improve signage on trails.

How we can get assistance from the Federal government and national recognition. This trail should be recognized just like the Pacific Crest Trail and the Appalachian Trail.

Safety and security near Mexican border, it should be ATV-free, permanently protect the trail corridor along its whole length.

Passage for mountain bikes.

Open corridors for bicycles on sections passing through wilderness and parks closed to cycling.

A larger marketing operation to help generate revenue and trail use.

Use of social networking to promote, gain volunteers for trail work days, and general fun.

Continuing maintenance

Better maps

More scheduled gatherings

Staying on trail

Gradually removing all of the patchwork “connections” that take the trail out of its natural line, and add confusion and route finding difficulties.

Improve the signage and markings

Keeping trails well marked

Keeping it clean

Good accessibility

Put up signs at trail junctions. While some areas (Kaibab) have been good about signage trail marking, others have been downright neglectful. The Mazatzal Fire was in 2004...8 years later, there are still no trail signs.

Improve the trail tread. Again, some areas have done a fine job of this. Others have NOT: the Four Peaks Passage has been brushed? Don't think so. The ridgeline in the Superstitions before you drop to Roosevelt Lake is a minefield of prickly pear cactus. Many areas, the poor tread are a result of decades of neglect.

Improve water sources. Tanks in poor repair, spring boxes destroyed, rusted culverts...In some areas, in an ideal world, a well or something reliable would really make those 30+ mile segments so much better. For example, the Hope Camp (Rincon Passage) windmill/tank could be restored. While most thru hikers go in the spring, there is year-round use of the trail. Even in spring, it is tough to find quality water.

Better trail tread and some form of signage which is consistent.

Maintenance and marking direction of the trail...keep it easy for people. The easier to use, the happier the people and more likely to take care of it and refer people to it...

Motor vehicles sneaking onto the areas of single track. Consistent signage (the Forest Service is going to continue to use their original trail and road names), the AZT descriptions should include those names in their descriptions. Have a consistent blaze for the AZT, plastic streamers/metal tags/whatever, just agree on one thing and use it.

Access, including to equines, and maintenance.

Access issues and trailhead issues.

Water resources.

Camping area that would include equestrians along the trail.

I cannot think of a third because I am so impressed with the trail.

1. Preservation: as "civilization" reaches out to the areas of the trail, especially near the Tucson and Phoenix metro areas, any plan should consider "rural buffers" between the trail and developed areas.
2. Access: parts of the trail are remote, as they should be, but especially in the section between Oracle and Kelvin, there is a lot of state trust land surrounded by private land that is difficult to access. Water access in that area is a problem as well. I'm also hoping that all areas outside of wilderness areas will remain open to mountain biking. The trail, as far as possible, should be multi-use nonmotorized.
3. Maintenance: there's a fine line here. One can oversign the wilderness, but serious amounts of downed timber or washouts can really stymie hikers. So far, our current system of trail stewards is working well, but we might also think about what happens with fire damage. There have been several major fires that have seriously damaged portions of the trail and its surrounding environment.

1. Trail maintenance

2. Additional water sources (every 10 miles)

3. Trail identification/signage

Signage, often in the middle of long segments is sometimes poor. Comfort signs and cairns along the way are MOST welcome.

Provide more and easier accessibility to various segments allowing perhaps for more segments with fewer miles per segment, which would provide more day hiking opportunities.

The continuation of building more events around the smaller Gateway Communities to help assist their economic challenges. Perhaps some trail running events as fund raising, etc.

1. Maintenance

2. Maintenance

3. Maintenance

Trail maintenance and the coordination of volunteer projects in conjunction with the users, hikers (AZ Trail Association), bikers, and horsemen.

It would be nice if there were fewer segments with cow plops all over them

More trail signs are needed in some areas where vegetation obscures where the trail is.

Vehicle access to all 42 segment trailheads would be appreciated with water and bathroom facilities.

1. Access (balancing preservation with freedom of use in such a way that users feel it is truly their trail will ensure long-term success).
2. Identification of geologic features and ecosystems to provide teaching opportunities and enhance all users' appreciation of Arizona's diversity and transitions.

The multi-use aspect should be kept in mind for all planning, and that the trail isn't just for users from the greater Phoenix area.

Are there locations on the trail that need improvement or change?

Build more water spots.

Concrete water tanks at crystal spring (segment 40 -north rim park border to east rim trailhead).

FS Road 194 at Strawberry-Boulder Dodge Road.

Oak tree canyon access.

The north end of leaving Oracle State Park is not accessible for horse use.

A few weeks ago, I walked through the underpass and found that my 5 foot 3 inch body needed to be bent in half in order to pass through the underpass! This has been a problem for many a year. No one seems to bother with a solution. Hopefully, in the near future, someone will go to where the park needs to cross the highway to do down the dirt Tiger Mine Rd. Thank You

Mazatzal Wilderness section would come to mind due to fire damage.

The Mazatzal Mountains need help! Also, it would be nice to get the “trail” off roads to minimize interaction with motorized vehicles.

Improve the water sources with springs, stock tanks, etc...

Have only hiked a fraction of the trail, but all the segments I’ve been on were great.

1) In cooperation with NPS, we need to finally secure mtn-bike access to the Hope Camp Trail segment through Saguaro NP’s Rincon Mountain District.

2) We need volunteers to step up to accomplish much needed drainage upkeep and maintenance on all portions of the trail. It’s one thing to build the trail, but a larger issue is maintaining it in good shape for posterity.

3) Equestrians need to be reminded to ride in single file so as not to turn the trail into a veritable jeep trail, and to avoid riding immediately alongside the trail tread. As a group they are responsible for much of the tread degradation that has occurred to date.

The single track along the gas line (near Antelope Peak) needs to be finished. Maybe even do some work on the trails south of there - to the road? There are so many cow trails it is hard to pick out the actual AZT.

Would be really nice if some of the sections in wilderness had a “workaround.” It stinks to have to ride dirt roads and pavement to get around them.

Or just let mountain bikes ride that little ribbon of trail.

And endless effort requiring scouts on all segments regularly to identify trail damage.

Trail washed out in several places in the Mazatzal (2 wash-outs north of Mt. Peely) and another south of Red Hills passage.

The area south of Patagonia.

Highline Trail. Not so bike friendly currently.

The Reavis Canyon segment north of the U.S. 60 could definitely use some love. The cat claw is quite painful.

I am most familiar with the trails around Flagstaff, and I think they could do with some seriously improved signage.

None that come to mind.

Almost every segment has some pieces that could be improved.

Not that I am aware of at this time.

Mazatzal: replace signs, rebuild tread (never seen a ‘trail’ so rocky), rebuild the Hopi Spring trough, replace the iron culvert at other spring.

Superstitions: remove prickly pear from ridgeline.

4 Peaks: BRUSH IT! The tread is narrow, but OK but the brush is ridiculous!

Miller Peak: signage there but in poor repair.

Highline Trail (Pine to General Sherman Cabin): Poor tread; brushy where fire has been.

Parker Lake: signage poor, indicates route to lake (but doesn't say that) and not trail to Canelo Hills.

I remember the area near 4 Peaks as being dangerous—too eroded in some areas and unclear directions.

Probably making trailheads more logical!! Many trailheads are technically located miles from a major road...like Hope Camp for Saguaro East. It would make sense to make the trailhead at X-9 road for the start and the end to be at Reddington Road instead of Italian Trap which requires 4-wheeling to!!!

The most confusing thing about the trail to me has been getting on and off of roads. If you miss the turnoff onto a single track or different road you can be going in circles for a long time.

All trailheads need to be reevaluated to look at expanding to accommodate enough parking to include ample horse rig parking.

I plan on doing the whole trail in sections and what parts I have been on I have no complaints.

I haven't hiked any sections lately that need improvement. I'd love to see more access to the section between Oracle and Kelvin, and good maps showing how to get in there.

YES, yes, yes!!! Please open up Oak Tree Canyon along Sonoita Highway 83. It is a perfect place for connections and resupply. It has been closed way too long and could be made into an enclosed parking with a step over gate.

Many fallen trees from the Reddington Fire near Summerhaven and a lot of 40 ft. burned out trees rocking in the wind. It is a very scary area to transverse. If one above the trail falls, they will domino down.

First, let me say kudos for just an outstanding job by all volunteers and organizations that have built and continue to maintain the trail. In completing the southern 12 segments, I have found very few improvement areas. However, we have found some areas where the trail writeups have not kept up to date with some trail route changes. Keeping current conditions updated would always be helpful. Also, there can never be too many AZ Trail markers, dollars donated to additional markers would be beneficial.

Even though I am a member I have not been on the trail.

Even though I am a member I have not been on the trail.

In conjunction with the new TMP develop trailheads for trail access. The new section on the SF peaks is an example. The bottom side on both the south and north ends need parking areas. The top at "aspen corner" is a good trailhead for day hikers and could be enhanced by these other two.

There have been a few segments that cross riparian areas that floods have made it difficult to figure out where the trail is. In addition some places have had burns resulting in burnt trees falling across the trail making getting by difficult at times. Segment Stewarts should be sure to check on this as needed.

In general, there are places that are eroding due to no provision for keeping the trail from becoming a new creek bed. Need more diversion berms in many segments.

I have worked a number of weekends on completing the trail so I am helping with some of the needed improvements."

NA (I have not yet traveled the entire trail).

The construction of the steps on the Quilter Trail was hugely disappointing. The slope could have been maintained by increasing both the rise and the run. As it is, the steps are difficult to maneuver, and potentially dangerous.

Public Engagement Report for the
Arizona National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan

Table 3. Public meeting responses

Public Meeting Responses	3/12/2012 Tucson			3/13 Superior	3/14 Payson	3/15/2012	Flagstaff		Totals	Rank	
	Group 1 (9)	Group 2 (7)	Group 3 (7)	Group 1 (6)	1 Group (7)		Group 2 (5)	Group 1 (6)			Group 2 (7)
Resource Protection	23	11	11	13	19	9	24	20	23	153	1
Corridors	14	8	16				12	5	5	60	5
Awareness	9	4		9	2	2	11		5	42	10
Water	14	22	10	6	8	14	4	10	6	94	2
Outreach to Nontraditional Users	2					1			4	7	
Ecotourism	17			4	7					28	
Cultural and Historic Resources	6	3	2	1	13		3	4	5	37	
Volunteers	1	7	4	13	2		5	3	12	47	7
Gateway Communities	3	3		7	8	5		17		43	9
Signs	13	6	6	12	15	11	5	4	11	83	3
Education	7		8	5	9	5	3	7	9	53	6
Trail Information (maps, brochures)	2	12	9	7	9	5	5	10	6	65	4
Route Signing	8									8	
Stewardship	2									2	
View Shed Preservation	7									7	
Legal Route (row, easement, purchase)	1		5							6	
Planning for Land Use Change	8									8	
Prioritize Trail in Multi-use Areas		9	4							13	
Access for maintenance, day use, equestrian		10	13		5	13			3	44	8
Trail condition standards, maintenance, monitoring		11		5			5		16	37	
Funding (trusts?)			10					5		15	
Public Safety					8	5	4	2		19	
Targeted materials—area specific guides					10	3		5		18	
Accommodation of through hikers @ NPS						2				2	
Support for ATA Partnership							2			2	
What is AZT's niche? (among other NSTs)							3			3	
Facilities, bathrooms, horse corals								6		6	
Designated camping								1		1	
Road segments (paved and dirt)								1		1	
ATA Network Group (chat)								5		5	

Appendix C: Use of Google docs™ for e-collaboration

An Excel spreadsheet appears in the database with the questions, timestamp, name, street address, email and phone. Two entries were dummy-coded as examples. This database remains open during the planning horizon. Only the person with a password can review the entries.

Table 4. Sample e-collaboration database

Timestamp	What is really neat about the Arizona Trail that you would like to share with someone?	Can you think of a name or phrase that best describes the trail?	What should be addressed in the Arizona Trail Comprehensive Plan?	Are there locations on the trail that need improvement or change?	What is your primary use (anticipated use) of the trail?	Name	Street Address	Email	Phone
3/13/2012	I like the birds and the bees	Arizona's backbone	Water, water, water	More water	Equestrian	Chris			
3/13/2012	My favorite place in AZ		Ecotourism	Build more water spots	Hiking	John			

Appendix D

Special Places Mapping Results

Questions for/to Group

- Are there special places on the trail that you would share with someone who had not been there? They can represent a natural, historic, or cultural feature.
- Are there natural resource issues or recreation conflicts that we need to be aware of? This can apply to trail in total or some location).
- Where these places that need our attention are and what should we do there? e.g. Signs, water, parking, erosion.

Highlights of the Mapping Results

- The comments ranged across the length of the AZT and mentioned all the land management partners in some comment.
- Clusters of comments appeared in the Superior, Payson, and Patagonia areas.
- 38 trail specific recommendations and conflict areas, 27 “special places”/experiences were recorded.
- 9 of the recommendations focused on trail maintenance issues, particularly signage.
- Water concerns represented 6 of the 38 action comments; more water above the rim in particular.
- Horse concerns represent 9 of the 38 (24 percent) of the action comments and 100 percent of the exclamation points in comments. Trailhead access for trailers and trail improvements for equestrian use were the primary concerns.
- Intra user conflict (AZT equestrian use vs. bikes) was only identified once.
- Interuser conflict (ATV, shooting sports, and cattle use) was the focus of a number of comments.

Results from public mapping exercise at Arizona Trail Association Annual Meeting.

Question 1: (Green) Are there special places on the trail that you would share with someone who had not been there? They can represent a natural, historic, or cultural feature?

Table 5. Question 1 comments and markers

Map Location Marker	Comment
1	Bear Spring wonderful stave redwood tank in a pristine valley, and the water tastes like honey.
2	Kentucky Camp (Sonoita) very interesting history regarding early mining and ranching.
3	Kentucky Camp (Sonoita)
4	There is always water here (although I’ve not been there in July/August). And

Map Location Marker	Comment
	there is an old stone cabin at the water crossing.
5	The Ranch, Oracle St. Park American (Americhu?) - Tiger
6	Mammoth has access to water at TH off Hwy. 77 north of town; we could have water here real easy! Great parking here.
7	Gila River Canyons specifically north of Gila River, Wow!
8	Picket Post area
9	Beautiful section of trail. Arizona Highway like photo ops.
10	The stretch north of Picket post TH up to FR 650, easy quick access from Phoenix, easy terrain, lovely views and veg.
11	Top of Reavis Saddle beautiful area with riparian trees in desert surroundings
12	Roosevelt Dam, Bridge, Old Town of Roosevelt Cemetery of early settlers
13	Starry Mine, Other Mercury Mines
14	Mazatzal Peak is inspirational
15	Oak spring area—water, wildlife, cultural history, beautiful meadow, biodiversity, Maples
16	Pine Sp. Look across the south overlooking Tonto Basin.
17	Highline/Bray Creek area running water, historic ranch country, ponderosa forest, historic home to native fish.
18	Historic railroads in area west and north of Mormon Lake.
19	Railroad history on trail, Mormon Lake.
20	The AZ Trail is a great addition to the trail system there. Coconino FS did a great job laying this section out!
21	AZ Trail From Snowbowl Road at Hotshot Ranch to FR 418—Wonderful trail construction and fantastic views.
22	Little Pleasant Valley segment 40b.
23	Tusayan, Historic Hull Cabin, trail along Coconino Rim between Grandview Lookout and Russell Tank, Grandview Interpretive Trail

Special place comments that did not have spatially explicit markers:

- Gila River to Picket Post, railroads, mining, wildlife, artesian wells.

- Water!!! And the life which it supports where it is found.
- Most concerned about access for shorter day hikes 5–10 miles, loop hikes? Determining condition of forest roads.
- Snowbowl to Shultz Pass

Results from public mapping exercise at Arizona Trail Association Annual Meeting.

Question 2: (Orange) Where are there places that need our attention and what should we do there? e.g. signs, water, parking, erosion

Table 6. Question 2 comments and markers

Map Location Marker	Comment
A	Try to make clean water sources at springs and tanks in Canelo Hills and north to Kentucky Camps maybe water taps on existing well tanks.
B	Water sources in temporal canyon could be fenced to keep part of the springs protected from cattle. Reroute trail around Mt. Wrightson in section 4.
C	Shooting in Reddington Pass area is a problem.
D	State Hwy. 77 crossing at Oracle box culvert filed in needs to be cleaned out—high speed traffic narrow dangerous surface crossing.
E	Mammoth/Tiger Mine signs where to park, trailhead needs to be large enough for horse trailers (at least 10 feet). A turnaround to get out mammoth parking is good enough.
F	North end of Reavis Ranch has no AZT sign.
G	Sunflower area: (1) poor access to northbound hikers on the west side of Hwy. 87; (2) trash, ATV abuse on east side of Hwy. 87 where thru hikers would want to camp; this is such a lovely stream and sycamore forest, but so abused!
H	Highline Trail, major trail washout—needs reroute about 2 miles east of Geronimo TH.
I	Improve trail so as to be passable by horse.
J	Signage is scarce from Marshall Lake north to scenic campground near Canyon Vista Lake Mary Road.
K	Trail from Russell Tank to southern boundary of Tusayan Ranger District. always needs maintenance due to encroaching grasslands. Needs to ID campsites for through hikers.

Natural resource comments that did not have spatially explicit markers:

- We need parking for at least 10 rigs or more—horse trailers and turnaround to get out!!!
- Maps need to be more accurate so that trailheads can be found.
- Clearer understanding of who/whom is in charge of what segment (BLM, Forest Service, etc.) and is there a fee?
- Forest Service roads need maintenance esp. difficult with horse trailers. FR 159? At Strawberry.
- From Redneck SP to Blue risk need a lot of work, washout to realignment.
- Need access maps and signs for day users and first time trail user.
- Working Mt. Wrightson Wilderness Area reroute!
- Some segments are too long...signage is ultimately important! Get AZ Trail stickers to stewards.
- Attention areas; east of Sunflower south of Roosevelt Lake, north of Reevis, oak and Manzanita in Mazatzals from Peeley TH to Verde River.
- Erosion past Reavis Ranch to Lake Roosevelt—horses can't pass, better signage on top of Mtn- AZ #1.

Results from public mapping exercise at Arizona Trail Association Annual Meeting.

Question 3. (Purple) Are there natural resource issues or recreation conflicts that we need to be aware of? This can apply to trail in total or some location?

Table 7. Question 3 comments and markers

Map Location Marker	Comment
aa	What advice do you have when hiking in areas where illegal immigrants may be on trails?
bb	Summerhaven to Prison Camp alternative trail desperately needed for horse users.
cc	Tusayan—Lack of permanent water for drinking from Tubb Ranch to Tusayan and south rim.

Natural resource and conflict comments that did not have spatially explicit markers:

- AZ Trail provides easy access for ATVs during hunting season (Aug-Dec) and antler shed collection (Feb-March).
- Water resources need to be developed in dry sections—H2O tanks, H2O catches, wells, etc.

- By Flagstaff, Hayes, Laice Lowell's, south of observatory guide wire sects (transects?) trail.
- North of Lake Mary have to ride 1/2 mile around it (for horse).
- Each spur trail into each gateway community needs to be well signed and identified with locally-supported.
- Marketable names-i.e. Superior Spur or Patagonia Path.
- As recreation use on the AT explodes, as a horseman I am concerned about mountain bikes. We have worked with the other users at Prescott National Forest.
- Water—cement tank at crystal spring seg. 40. Keep old cement tanks for horse water on entire trail if possible.
- Safe access to TH 4WD only roads clearly identified or improved so not as restricted
- The AT will need alternate bypass route around each segment that is currently closed to mountain hiking.
- This will be essential for the future popularity of the trail and to maintain future user support.
- Local support for sustained management and maintenance of the AZT will hinge on the presence of bonifide spur trails into the gateway community supply and service provider
- The plan should identify the need for spurs and proposed routes for each of the gateway communities.
- I have found many of the carsonite trail signs knocked over.
- Perhaps develop campsites along the AZ trail, developed campsites near water sources.
- Clear fire damage sooner than later. Do not wait 4–5 years to start. Fire regrowth keeps growing regardless of FS budgets.

