

Appendix E. Proposed and Possible Management Actions

Introduction

This appendix describes some of the proposed and possible management actions that may take place on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs at the project or activity level during the planning period (approximately 10 to 15 years) to maintain or move toward desired conditions as described in this plan. This list is not intended to be all inclusive; it is simply a list of possible actions that may take place based on the plan objectives and management approaches. This information is not a commitment to take any action and is not a “proposal” as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR § 1508.23, 42 USC 4322(2)(C)).

A plan amendment is not required to change or modify any of the proposed or possible management actions. The list of these actions can be updated at any time through an administrative change of the plan.

Proposed Management Actions

The objectives in chapter 2 of the plan represent projects or activities intended to be accomplished during the planning period. These are listed in the table below.

Table 16. List of proposed management actions (plan objectives)

Category	Project/Activity	Timeframe to Complete
Overall Ecosystem Health	Improve the condition class on at least 10 priority 6 th level HUC watersheds by removing or mitigating degrading factors.	Planning Period
Soil	Enhance or restore an average of 350 acres per year within priority 6 th level HUC watersheds, including treating the causes of State and federally designated impaired or threatened waters to improve watershed condition and water quality.	Annually
Aquatic Habitat and Species	Enhance or restore 5 to 15 miles of stream and riparian habitat to restore structure, composition, and function of physical habitat for native fisheries and riparian-dependent species.	Annually
Aquatic Habitat and Species	Complete at least five projects (e.g., remove barriers, restore dewatered stream segments, or connect fragmented habitat) to provide for aquatic and riparian-associated species and migratory species.	Planning Period
Riparian Areas	Move 200 to 500 acres toward desired composition, structure, and function of streams, floodplains, and riparian vegetation.	Annually
Riparian Areas	Relocate, repair, improve, or decommission a minimum of 4 miles of National Forest System roads or trails that add sediment to streams, damage riparian vegetation, erode streambanks, cause gullies, and/or compact floodplain soils.	Planning Period
Riparian Areas	Remove an average of 2 miles of unauthorized roads or trails that add sediment to streams, damage riparian vegetation, erode streambanks, cause gullies, and/or compact floodplain soils.	Annually

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Category	Project/Activity	Timeframe to Complete
Riparian Areas	Enhance or restore 5 to 25 wet meadows or cienegas to proper hydrologic function and native plant and animal species composition.	Planning Period
Riparian Areas	Work with partners to reduce animal damage to native willows and other riparian species on an average of 5 miles of riparian habitat.	Annually
Forests	Treat 5,000 to 35,000 acres to reduce tree densities, restore natural fire regimes, promote species habitat and ecosystem health, reduce fire hazard, maintain desired conditions, initiate recovery from uncharacteristic disturbance, and provide forest products, leaving a desired mix of species with the range of desired densities that are resilient to changing climatic conditions.	Annually
Aspen	Aspen dominated and codominated acres within forested PNVTs, representing a range of age classes, are maintained on at least 50,000 acres.	Planning Period
Woodlands	Treat or maintain 5,000 to 15,000 acres to promote a highly diverse structure.	Annually
Grasslands	Decrease or maintain the woody canopy cover at less than 10 percent by treating up to 25,000 acres.	Annually
Wildlife and Rare Plants	Improve wildlife connectivity by removing at least five unneeded structures (e.g., fence).	Annually
Invasive Species	Contain, control, or eradicate invasive species (e.g., musk thistle, Dalmatian toadflax) on 500 to 3,500 acres.	Annually
Invasive Species	Control or eradicate invasive species (e.g., tamarisk, bullfrogs) on at least 2 stream miles.	Annually
Dispersed Recreation	Rehabilitate, stabilize, revegetate, or relocate an average of five dispersed campsites to improve recreation opportunities and/or protect the environment.	Annually
Dispersed Recreation	Work with Arizona Game and Fish Department, Arizona Department of Transportation, and other partners to provide at least 10 new wildlife viewing opportunities.	Planning Period
Developed Recreation	Reduce the developed recreation deferred maintenance backlog at plan approval by 10 percent.	Planning Period
Developed Recreation	Accessible and wildlife-proof trash facilities should be provided in all developed sites where trash is collected.	Planning Period
Motorized Opportunities	Maintain at least 20 percent of the passenger vehicle and 10 percent of the high-clearance vehicle NFS roads.	Annually
Motorized Opportunities	Maintain at least 20 percent of NFS motorized trails.	Annually
Nonmotorized Opportunities	Maintain at least 20 percent of nonmotorized trails.	Annually
National Recreation Trails	Initiate the process for the regional forester to remove the NRT designation from the Escudilla Trail in conformance with Forest Service Manual 2353.57 – Management of National Recreation Trails.	Within 5 years of plan approval
Scenic Resources	Accomplish an average of five projects to enhance scenic resources (e.g., restore grasslands and aspen, remove unnecessary fences, close and rehabilitate unneeded gravel/cinder pits).	Annually

Category	Project/Activity	Timeframe to Complete
Lands	Survey and post on average 2 to 5 miles of unposted NFS boundary.	Annually
Lands	Maintain on average 2 to 5 miles of property boundary posting and corner monuments.	Annually
Lands	Resolve an average of three existing trespass cases.	Annually
Cultural Resources	National Register sites and priority cultural resources are inspected.	Every 2 years or according to Southwestern Region Heritage program standards
Cultural Resources	Nominate at least five eligible cultural resources for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).	Planning Period
Cultural Resources	Provide a Passport in Time (PIT) or other education project to provide opportunities for the public to learn about the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs' past and cultural resources.	Annually
Cultural Resources	Complete a minimum of 100 acres of nonproject cultural inventory to expand existing knowledge about the nature, location, and management needs of the forests' cultural resources.	Annually
American Indian Rights and Interests	A minimum of five MOUs are renewed or established with tribes associated with the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs.	Planning Period
Forest Products	Prepare and offer up to an average of 122,000 CCF from suitable timberlands resulting from sustainable harvest to provide wood products to businesses and individuals.	Annually
Forest Products	Provide up to 94,000 CCF (119,380 cords) of firewood for personal and commercial use.	Annually
Forest Products	Provide an average of 5,000 permits for Christmas trees.	Annually
Water Uses	Prepare at least one instream flow water rights applications until water acquisition needs are complete to sustain riparian areas, fish, wildlife, and water-based recreation.	Annually

Possible Management Actions

The “Management Approaches” sections of chapters 2 and 3 of the plan describe some of the possible management actions for achieving desired conditions and objectives. These are summarized below.

Overall Ecosystem Health

- Use the Watershed Condition Framework process to identify priority watersheds for restoration.
- Restore watersheds through treatments to reestablish and then maintain natural fire regimes, improve riparian condition, restore meadows or openings, repair gullies, and reduce erosion.
- Utilize wildland fire (prescribed fire and use of wildland fire) to reintroduce fire into the ecosystems, restore natural fire regimes, and remove excessive fuels.

Air

- Work with the State of Arizona in the air quality regulatory process.

Soil

- Restore areas by seeding, mulching, stabilization of gullies, and obliteration of unauthorized routes.
- Update the Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (TES) to reflect current conditions and concepts.

Water Resources

- Establish streamside management zones to protect water quality.

Aquatic Habitat and Species

- Prioritize habitat improvement projects with an emphasis on federally listed species and other species with population or habitat concerns.
- Cooperate with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to protect and reintroduce native aquatic species and control or eradicate nonnative species.
- Enhance or restore aquatic habitat through stabilization of stream banks and road crossings, facilitation of aquatic species passage and movement, restoration of perennial flows and native vegetation, and removal of unneeded impoundments.

Vegetation Management

- Prioritize vegetation treatments in focus watersheds and areas identified in community wildfire protection plans, including regular treatments to maintain desired conditions in the Community-Forest Intermix Management Area.
- Collect, store, propagate, and use local plant materials for continued genetic diversity.
- Use appropriate cutting methods, regeneration, and/or fire to accomplish vegetation treatment objectives and to manage dwarf mistletoe and other insect and disease infestations. Possible vegetation management practices are identified in “Appendix B. Vegetation Management Practices.”
- Work with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to address concerns about long term aspen reestablishment. Restore aspen by providing/improving substitute forage away from aspen, removing conifer competition, fencing to exclude ungulates, and range management practices.

Riparian Areas

- Prioritize treatments in riparian areas to occur in focus watersheds and those that have native fish and aquatic species concerns.
- Use the Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) methodology to inventory riparian condition.
- Improve riparian conditions by removing non-riparian species, planting or restoring native species, stabilizing or eliminating roads, encouraging beaver colonization, and constructing fencing. Treatments may include restoration of hardwood and cottonwood galleries, restoration of upland conditions by removing encroaching trees and/or reducing tree densities, and restoration of infrequent fire.

- Alter or remove large human constructed dams to restore and/or improve riparian and wetland functionality.
- Work with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to minimize ungulate impacts to riparian vegetation and structure.
- Work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to update existing conservation agreements and develop new ones as needed.

Wildlife and Rare Plants

- Work collaboratively with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to protect and reintroduce native species and to control or eradicate nonnative, undesirable species.
- Cooperate with other State and Federal agencies, tribes, as well as private entities and adjacent landowners, to support species diversity, recovery, and wildlife management.
- Implement actions (e.g., closures, timing of treatments, seasonal road restrictions) to prevent relisting of species as threatened or endangered or provide wildlife refuge.
- Coordinate with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Arizona Wildlife Linkages Working Group, and Arizona Department of Transportation to enhance public safety and promote passage of wildlife. Develop, construct, and install habitat connecting and safer wildlife crossings, and modify proposals to account for critical wildlife linkages.
- Coordinate with USDA Wildlife Services program and the State of Arizona to promote healthy populations of predators, while reducing livestock conflicts with wildlife.
- Promote public education and valuing of the wildlife resource on the forests.

Invasive Species

- Use an array of tools (chemical, biological, mechanical, and cultural) to control or eradicate invasive species.
- Provide education and outreach programs designed to increase awareness of invasive species.
- Implement preventative measures (e.g., pre- and post-work equipment sanitation, requiring certified weed-free seed and hay) through permitting, contracting, and other forest administrative processes.
- Collaborate with other agencies and entities to replace nonnative aquatic species with natives.
- Encourage the Arizona Department of Transportation to treat noxious weeds and nonnative invasive plants along highways.
- Cooperate with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Arizona Department of Transportation, local governments, and other organizations to support a successful invasive species management program.

Landscape Scale Disturbance Events

- Remove hazard trees and salvage dead trees, or consider deferring restoration or salvage projects, where extensive tree mortality exists.
- Plant trees and shrubs when needed to establish native vegetation and/or habitat recovery.
- Evaluate developed sites and roads for continued and future use. Decommission or relocate roads that are no longer necessary or safe.
- Re-establish forest boundary and/or other ownership landlines and land survey monuments.

Developed and Dispersed Recreation

- Complete supply and demand studies to better understand recreation needs.
- Use private ventures and partnerships to help provide recreation opportunities.
- Develop management plans, including vegetation management strategies, for dispersed and developed recreation areas.
- Operate and maintain recreation and administrative developments.
- Redesign facilities to accommodate persons with disabilities, respond to demographic changes, and reduce conflicts. Balance new construction with current and future maintenance requirements.
- Develop additional recreation rentals (e.g., cabins).

Motorized and Nonmotorized Opportunities

- Enhance opportunities for motorized trail users, relocate trails to reduce conflicts, and develop management plans for designated motorized use areas.
- Implement the Travel Management Rule (36 CFR § 212).
- Construct temporary roads where needed for emergency operations or contract, permit, lease, or other written authorization.
- Remove routes from the transportation system with follow-up treatments including outslowing roadbeds, removal of stream crossing structures, breaching of drainage ditches, removal of unstable fills, maintenance or restoration of fish passage, and removal of invasive weeds.
- Implement measures (e.g., education, signage, law enforcement, seasonal road closures) to discourage encroachment of motorized vehicles into nonmotorized areas.
- Coordinate with the Federal Highway Administration and Arizona Department of Transportation to facilitate transportation needs, planned improvements, and transportation conditions.
- Work with the Arizona Department of Transportation to alleviate concerns with scenic resources, maintenance activities, use of herbicides, use of deicing agents, and creation of safety turnouts, parking lots, and wildlife crossings.
- Use educational techniques (e.g., brochures, signs) to help users understand motorized and nonmotorized use etiquette.
- Maintain trails to provide for user safety, minimize erosion, provide recreation opportunities, and accommodate administrative needs. Work with partners, user groups, and volunteers to maintain trails.
- Reconstruct or add nonmotorized trails near population centers or developed recreation sites.

Scenic Byways

- Implement projects and activities outlined in the “Coronado Trail Corridor Management Plan.”

Eligible and Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers

- Conduct suitability studies for eligible wild and scenic rivers.

Conservation Education

- Provide public information, interpretive services, and environmental education programs and activities that connect people to the land and to each other.
- Operate and maintain two visitor centers.

Lands

- Complete land adjustments (e.g., exchanges, purchases) to consolidate the NFS land base, reduce administrative problems and costs, enhance public access and use, and support resource management objectives.
- Work with local communities to understand their community expansion needs. Work with communities during development of their master plans and with communities, developers, and homeowner groups to retain legal access to public lands.
- Use education, partnerships, and law enforcement to reduce trespass issues.

Cultural Resources

- Inventory, protect, study/evaluate, interpret, and preserve cultural resources.
- Collaborate with other forests, the State Historic Preservation Officer, the public, and affiliated tribes to develop management strategies for cultural resources.

American Indian Rights and Interests

- Develop and maintain effective working relationships and recognize American Indian tribal viewpoints.
- Repatriate human remains and artifacts.
- Implement temporary closures of forest lands for traditional and cultural purposes.

Forest Products

- Use timber production and tree cutting to achieve vegetation desired conditions, contribute to the local and regional economy, and achieve such purposes as restoration, salvage, fuels management, insect and disease mitigation, hazard tree removal, protection or enhancement of wildlife habitat, perform research or administrative studies, or recreation and scenery management.
- Offer up to the allowable sale quantity (ASQ) an average of 122,000 CCF per year. The ASQ represents the amount of timber (not including firewood or nonindustrial wood) that may be sold from lands suitable for timber production. Offer other desired forest products, such as house logs, through permits or small sales.
- Use a variety of partnerships and authorities for making forest products available to uses (e.g., Tribal Forest Protection Act, procurement contracts, stewardship contracts, forest products permits).
- Identify specific areas for forest product removal (e.g., Christmas tree, firewood).

Livestock Grazing

- Complete environmental analysis and assess and update allotment management plans to emphasize sustainable stocking levels, forage utilization, mitigation measures, and appropriate grazing systems.

- Adjust timing, intensity, and frequency of livestock grazing to respond to changing resource conditions, including drought.
- Evaluate and determine appropriate use for vacant allotments.
- Work with permittees, the State, tribes, and other organizations to maintain or improve rangeland conditions.
- Work with the Tonto National Forest, Arizona Game and Fish Department, sheep permittees, and other permittees to administer the Heber-Reno and Morgan Mountain sheep driveways.
- Work with non-permittee livestock owners to prevent unauthorized livestock.
- Maintain range developments (e.g., fence, corrals).

Minerals and Geology

- Cooperate with the State and other agencies to inventory, mitigate, and rehabilitate hazardous abandoned mines and mined areas.
- Develop pit plans for mineral material pits.
- Develop cave management plans as needed.

Special Uses

- Issue special use authorizations that complement other opportunities and are based on public need or cannot be met on private or other Federal lands.
- Process requests for energy development and transmission corridors.
- Work with public road agencies to accept USDA easements on roads they maintain and/or provide access to private properties.

Water Uses

- Provide adequate water supplies to support the mission of the Agency and maintain continuous water supplies to downstream uses on and off the forests.
- Participate in water rights adjudications and honor the water rights of others.
- Work with State and other agencies to deal with groundwater issues and maintain instream flows.
- Conserve water through education of water uses on conservation measures and by applying good water management practices.

Wildland Fire Management

- Use a decision support process to guide and document wildfire management decisions that provide for firefighter and public safety, minimize costs and resource damage, and are consistent with values to be protected and management objectives.
- Develop site-specific burn plans to guide implementation of the plan's prescribed fire treatment objectives.
- Consider developing joint silvicultural prescriptions and burn plans.
- Coordinate management of wildland fire with neighboring jurisdictions.

Management Areas

- Use mechanized methods and prescribed fire on a regular basis in the Community-Forest Intermix Management Area. Work with adjacent landowners and communities to encourage new and existing developments to take into account measures to protect people, property, and natural resources from wildfire.
- Improve wildlife habitat and maintain existing wildlife developments within the Wildlife Quiet Area Management Area.
- Conduct ecological restoration activities including restoration of ecological conditions or habitat components, soil stabilization, prescribed fire and use of wildland fire, hazardous fuels reduction, and invasive species reduction with the Natural Landscape Management Area.
- Recommend land in the Recommended Research Natural Area and Recommended Wilderness Management Areas for special area designation.
- Develop wilderness management plans.

