

Santa Catalina Trail Plan



Executive Summary | November 2022

The Santa Catalina Ranger District of the Coronado National Forest (CNF) is an important community asset, natural landscape, and cultural resource. It contains over 265,000 acres of rugged sky island canyons and mountains at the edge of the growing Tucson metropolitan area.

The district contains 250 miles of trails including the Arizona National Scenic Trail. These trails are predominantly open to non-motorized uses including hiking, mountain biking, running, horseback riding, hunting, and rock climbing with a smaller share of the system available for motorized use. Although trail use accounts for hundreds of thousands of visits annually, a holistic trail planning effort for the district has never been completed. The Draft Santa Catalina Trail Plan provides a framework for maintaining, enhancing, and expanding the area's trail network.

The purpose of this project is to create a system of trails and trailheads that will be ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable. It seeks to make that system a reality through thoughtful planning and open collaboration with partners and the community. The draft plan includes recommendations to diversity trail opportunities, improve sustainability, create new trail connections, and boost trailhead access. It also recommends ways to educate visitors and protect the area's natural and cultural heritage. Recommendations in the draft include:

- 22 trail development projects
- 18 access or trailhead projects
- 8 supporting projects such as visitor information upgrades

Under the proposals, the trail system would grow by approximately 10%, including adopting, improving, and managing popular areas like the Golder Ranch – 50 Year Trail system and the Milagrosa Trail. In total, approximately 50 miles are proposed for adoption or new construction, while 25 miles of existing official trail are identify for removal from the system.



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The CNF wants to ensure that people from all backgrounds and of all abilities have great experiences with nature. Seventy percent of forest visitors report using trails during their visit to the Forest.

The plan serves as a connection between the forest plan and site-specific projects. Projects described in the plan are conceptual only; specific locations and trail alignments may change as projects are fully analyzed for their environmental impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act. Implementation of the plan will take at least 15 years, although several projects are identified as top priority.

The first step in the planning process was a 70-day sensing period using an interactive map. Over 3,000 comments and responses were submitted. The CNF hosted focus groups, partnership discussions and virtual and in-person public meetings throughout 2022 to develop the plan.

CNF Invites Your Feedback

The public and our partners are invited to provide feedback via email to SM.FS.scrd@usda.gov until December 2, 2022. The plan will be finalized after the comments are reviewed.



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