
File Code: 6270; 1950
Date: October 11, 2019

Friends and Neighbors of the Coronado National Forest

The Coronado National Forest would like to hear your concerns, questions, and suggestions regarding a proposal to develop the South Fork Day Use Area project located in Cave Creek Canyon in the Chiricahua Ecosystem Management Area. This project proposes to restore and enhance the level of services provided in Cave Creek Canyon which were destroyed during flooding in 2014. The proposed activities would occur on National Forest System (NFS) lands managed by the Douglas Ranger District on the Coronado National Forest (CNF).

The purpose of this letter is to inform interested and affected parties of the proposed action and to announce an opportunity to comment during a 30-day scoping period. Pursuant to 36 CFR 220.7(a), analysis of the proposal will be documented in an Environmental Assessment (EA) because the proposal is not categorically excluded from documentation per 36 CFR 220.6 and the need of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has not been determined per 36 CFR 220.5. The EA will evaluate the potential impacts resulting from the implementation of this project. The proposed project is an activity implementing a land management plan and is subject to the pre-decisional objection process per 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action, consistent with law, regulation, and policy applicable to the administration of the Coronado National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, is to provide sustainable facilities within Cave Creek Canyon to accommodate visitor use while reducing negative environmental impacts to this area. The need for this project is driven by the imbalance between visitor use and the level of services provided in Cave Creek Canyon.

The primary needs for this project include:

- **Increase Public Safety:**
 - Addition of facilities to improve accessibility and better accommodate visitor needs.
 - Addition of facilities to reduce visitor exposure to waste.
- **Improve Recreation Experience:**
 - Reduce amount of litter and human waste at site by providing trash and toilet facilities.
 - Improve accessibility for all visitors through the addition of benches, tables, and trails to better accommodate needs and abilities.
 - Restore level of amenities; the South Fork Day Use Area was destroyed during flooding in 2014 and no facilities have been built since that event.
 - Discourage creation of social trails through the construction of an accessible aggregate pathway and a native dirt trail.
- **Sustainable Recreation:**



- Conform with Region 3 Sustainable Recreation Strategy Performance and Accomplishment Measures.
- Encouraging local communities and partnerships to help manage a sustainable recreation program, and ensuring that partners are recognized for their roles in providing recreational opportunities.

Proposed Action

The Douglas Ranger District is proposing to restore and enhance a Day Use Area at the terminus of South Fork Road off of Forest Road 42 in Cave Creek Canyon. The proposed action consists of the installation and construction of the following components (**Figure 1**):

- Install a new vault restroom
- Install a new bear-proof trash bin
- Install a new information kiosk, pay station, and/or donation box
- Create and install new picnic sites
- Install strategically placed benches to accommodate visitor needs
- Construct a stabilized aggregate pathway
- Construct a native dirt trail
- Construct a new access route from restroom building
- Install adequate drainage features

Decision to be Made

The District Ranger for the Douglas Ranger District is the Responsible Official for this project. The decision to be made is whether to approve the proposed action, develop alternatives based on scoping comments, or not to implement the project at this time. The decision would also include a determination of consistency with the Forest Plan, National Forest Management Act, required consultations and evaluations and applicable laws, regulations and executive orders.

This project appears on the Coronado National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) Current Projects webpage http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=56779. Input has been considered from an interdisciplinary team to guide this preliminary project proposal. The proposed project will require additional review and analysis to ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, National Preservation Act, and other policy and guidance.

How to Comment

We are now inviting you to submit comments during the scoping period. This scoping period is intended to provide interested and affected parties with an opportunity to provide input to inform the decision being made by the Responsible Official. Specifically, we would like to invite your comments regarding issues, opportunities, concerns, and/or suggestions for the proposed action.

Please make your comments as specific as possible. If you provide recommendations for changes to the proposed action, please include the reasons for your recommendations. This information will help us identify the need for alternatives. Per 36 CFR 218.2, comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider. Specific written comments (§218.2) on the proposed project will be most valuable to the planning process if submitted within **30**

calendar days following publication of this notice in the *Douglas Dispatch*. If the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday or Federal holiday, comments will be accepted until the end of the next Federal working day. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Submit electronic comments including attachments using the Public Comment Form at:
<https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=56779>.

Written comments, including attachments, may be submitted via mail, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays) to:

U.S. Forest Service, Coronado National Forest
Emily Reynolds, NEPA Planner
ATTN: South Fork Day Use Area
300 W. Congress Street
Tucson, AZ 85701
PHONE: 520-388-8311.

Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) about this proposed project or activity during this or another public comment period established by the Responsible Official will be eligible to file an objection. Other requirements to be eligible to submit an objection are defined by CFR 218.25(a)(3) and include name, postal address, title of the project, signature or other verification of identity upon request, and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility to object as an individual. A timely submission will be determined as outlined in 36 CFR 218.25(a)(4). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted. Names and contact information submitted with comments will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Thank you for your interest and participation in the activities of the Coronado National Forest.

Sincerely,



DOUG RUPPEL
District Ranger