



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Peaks/Mormon Lake
Ranger Districts

5075 N. Highway 89
Flagstaff, AZ 86004-2852
Phone: (928) 526-0866
Fax: (928) 527-8288

File Code: 1950-1

Date: August 29, 2008

Dear Participant,

The Peaks and Mormon Lake Ranger Districts of the Coconino National Forest, in partnership with Flagstaff Biking Organization, Coconino County and the City of Flagstaff, have completed the planning and environmental analysis for the Flagstaff Loop Trail project. I am excited about providing you with the enclosed copy of the Final Decision for the project. We are providing a copy of the document to you since you provided comments on a Proposed Action made available for comment in February of this year, or you otherwise expressed interest in the project. Feedback on the project was 100 percent positive. We received a number of suggestions concerning implementation of the project and will incorporate many of these as we go forward with the on-the-ground implementation. It will take a number of years to completely implement the project, as the trail crosses a number of jurisdictional boundaries and ownerships. The pace of implementation will be dependant on the availability of funding, but I expect some phases of the implementation to begin this year. Implementation may begin immediately and this decision is not subject to administrative appeal.

I have decided to authorize a non-motorized trail system on National Forest System lands that - when connected to proposed and existing trails on city, state and county lands - will form a continuous trail loop surrounding the City of Flagstaff. The enclosed Decision addresses the Forest Service owned lands included in the project design to comply with the Federal requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). While the analysis and enclosed decision apply to National Forest System lands only, the locations and routes of the segments of trail on other ownerships is included so that the complete scope of the project can be viewed in the context of the Forest Service decision. The purpose of this trail system is to provide multiple access points from the city and county to a continuous loop trail around Flagstaff, and to provide quality experiences for recreationists with a sustainable, well-designed trail system. As you may remember from the background discussion of the Proposed Action, the concept of a continuous loop trail around and through the city has been considered in numerous planning efforts by the Partnering agencies, organizations, and citizens, as well as the Forest Service for a number of years.

A managed, well-designed trail system to accommodate non-motorized uses will greatly enhance access to the forest and enhance recreational opportunities and experiences. In a time of rapidly expanding recreational use and continued city growth, providing well-designed and managed access not only enhances recreational experience and opportunity, but also reduces impacts from unplanned, un-designed social trail creation that can and does occur in the absence of designed systems. Reducing these impacts can help to restore and maintain the forest character that makes the area desirable for these activities. Our intent is to provide continued, sustainable access and quality recreational experiences while minimizing impacts to resources, private property, and residents. The decision may also be found on the Coconino National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/nepa/index.shtml>.



We appreciate your interest and involvement in the management of the Peaks and Mormon Lake Ranger Districts. Should you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Alvin Brown, ID Team Leader at (928) 527-8234 or Brian Tritle at (928) 527-8201.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael T. Elson

MICHAEL T. ELSON
District Ranger