



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Peaks/Mormon Lake
Ranger Districts

5075 N. Highway 89
Flagstaff, AZ 86004-2852
Phone: (928) 526-0866
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File Code: 1950-1

Date: February 6, 2008

Dear Participant,

The Peaks and Mormon Lake Ranger Districts of the Coconino National Forest, in partnership with Flagstaff Biking Organization, Coconino County and City of Flagstaff, are proposing a project called the Flagstaff Loop Trail. There are several elements of the project that may be of interest to you as neighbors and users of the area.

This project proposal is for a non-motorized trail system that will offer non-motorized trail opportunities on Forest Service lands that - when connected to proposed and existing trails on city, state and county lands - will form a continuous trail loop opportunity surrounding the City of Flagstaff. The enclosed Proposed Action addresses the Forest Service owned lands included in the proposed project design to comply with the Federal requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for these kinds of undertakings. While the analysis and subsequent decisions related to this proposal apply to Forest Service 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 and considered in the context of the Forest Service proposal. The purpose of this trails system is to provide multiple access areas from the city and county to a continuous loop trail and provide quality experiences for recreationists visiting the forest surrounding the Flagstaff area, while maintaining forest resources. As you will see in 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 meet non-motorized uses will greatly enhance access to the forest and enhance recreational experience. In a time of rapidly expanding recreational use and as the city continues to grow, providing well designed and managed access not only enhances recreational experience and opportunity but reduces forest 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 the best access that minimizes the impacts to the resources, private property, and residents, while providing reasonable recreational access and experiences. The Proposed Action and associated maps describe the details and background for how we have arrived at this proposal. The Proposed Action and better quality color maps may also be found on the Coconino National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/nepa/index.shtml>.

To enable us to consider and analyze the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action, I am asking you whether you have any environmental concerns about the project. I have enclosed a copy of the Proposed Action along with a location map and a trail segment map for your review and comment. Also, a segment data table has been included that provides specific details of the segments on all ownerships to provide additional information to you. I am inviting your input on this project in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).



Specifically, I would like you to identify any environmental issues you have on the Proposed Action. Your comments, along with continuing interdisciplinary discussion between Forest Service resource specialists (i.e. recreation, roads, wildlife, heritage, trails) will also be used to determine the level of environmental analysis. Written comments are most helpful to us. Comments should be specific to this Proposed Action. Also, if you are making a comment expressing a concern, it is most helpful if you can suggest other options or alternatives to consider. This will help us to continue the collaborative effort with the Partners, community and other users, and aid in our goal to develop a system that protects the National Forest resources, while providing quality recreational access and experiences with the least impact on the Community.

A 30 day comment period is being provided, that will begin on **February 14, 2008**. Please provide your comments to me by **March 14, 2008**. If you provide comments to this proposed action, you will continue to receive the NEPA documentation. In the event that you choose not to comment, but would like a copy of the final decision, please contact Alvin Brown, Interdisciplinary Team Leader (ID Team Leader).

Written or oral comments may be submitted via mail, fax, telephone, or in person (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays) to the District Ranger, Gene Waldrip, 2075 N. Hwy 89, flagstaff, AZ 86004, FAX (928) 527-8288, TEL (928) 526-0866, or by e-mail to comments-southwestern-coconino-peaks@fs.fed.us. The name and address of the person submitting electronic comments must be included.

Our timeline is to solicit public comment and work on the environmental analysis through the spring. The earliest I would make a decision would be this summer.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this project and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR parts 215 or 217, if NEPA documentation results in an appealable decision. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any persons may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied; the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within seven days.

We appreciate your interest and continuing cooperation with our Forest management programs. 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. I look forward to hearing from you by March 14.

Sincerely,

/S/ ALVIN BROWN
ACTING FOR

GENE WALDRIP
District Ranger