

**9:30am-12:30pm****Locations:**

Flagstaff- Coconino National Forest Supervisor's Office  
Fredonia-North Kaibab Ranger District  
Phoenix-Tonto National Forest Supervisor's Office

**Handouts:**

- 1.) Agenda
- 2.) Interim Region-3 Revision Strategy
- 3.) Forest Plan Revision Documents matrix
- 4.) Proposed Timelines for Coconino and Kaibab Forest Planning
- 5.) Coconino National Forest Economic and Social Sustainability Assessment (see <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/plan-revision.shtml>)
- 6.) Comment and evaluation forms

**Agenda:**

- 1.) Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review
- 2.) Overview of Kaibab and Coconino' Plan Revision Processes
- 3.) Discussion
- 4.) Break
- 5.) Continuation of Action Scenario Development
- 6.) Meeting Evaluation and Wrap-up
- 7.) Adjourn

**1.) Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review**

Overview of Planning Rule and purpose of this meeting: This meeting will not determine the exact process that will be used for community involvement. After this meeting, the Forests will need to go back to discuss the scenarios and assess its ability to accomplish different types of public involvement. In addition the 2008 Planning Rule will be coming out this spring; it is an election year (Forest Service falls under the Executive Branch) which can cause uncertainties about policy. It is difficult for any agency to promulgate regulations after May or June during a general election year.

Today's objectives: Group discussion on future levels of involvement in the Forest Plan Revision Process, giving feedback to both Forests on this topic. The objective of this meeting is for the Forests to receive feedback, not discuss the content of potential topic issues.

**2.) Overview of Kaibab National Forest (KNF) and Coconino National Forest (CNF) Plan Revision Processes****A. Coconino National Forest**

The 2005 Planning Rule was enjoined on March 30<sup>th</sup> 2007. Some other Forest Service regions halted/dissanded many of their planning teams as a result of rule enjoinderment; Region 3 decided to continue forward in a rule neutral manner. It is still unclear what will happen with the New Mexico Forests' schedules. Everyone present should have received a copy of the regional strategy with your meeting notification. You all were invited because of your level of past involvement, (such as working groups or John Russell's discussion groups). We have been silent for a while and we wanted to catch you up and have some discussion and feedback about the past year of processes and future possibilities.

#### B. Kaibab National Forest

Following similar process as Coconino National Forest. This is the Kaibab's 1<sup>st</sup> interaction with some of public since April. Meetings were not held because the Forest did not want to hold meetings without a product for people to look at and discuss. We will not be making decisions today, just trying to get idea where folks are at.

#### C. Forest Plan Revision Documents Matrix

- CNF Economic and Social Sustainability Assessment currently available on forest website.
- CNF Ecological Sustainability Assessment completion is pending.
- KNF Ecological Sustainability Assessment and Socioeconomic Sustainability Assessment are both pending. KNF timeline is a little behind CNF.
- All documents will be posted on appropriate forest website when available.

#### D. CNF Ecological Sustainability Assessment Status

This report is comprised of 4 main prongs: vegetation, soil & water, fire, and wildlife. Vegetation has been worked on for over 1½ years, using products prepared by The Nature Conservancy through a cost-share agreement as well as products produced by the Regional Office. Wildlife and plants have been worked on since fall of 2006 and include input from the Species Diversity Working Group last year. There were two working groups – Species Diversity and Ecological Diversity. Working groups included personnel from Arizona Game & Fish Department and US Fish and Wildlife Service. Members representing special interest groups and individual members from the public also attended. The fire portion used LANDFIRE as the data source. Forest Service was entered into an analysis phase after the Planning Rule was enjoined. Forest Service proceeded in the best fashion we could while remaining rule neutral. All four prongs have been integrated into the Ecological Sustainability Assessment that is currently at the Regional Office (RO) for review. The Assessment is planning rule neutral, following National Forest Management Act (NFMA). The Assessment describes the relationship of CNF area as related to the larger landscape beyond the boundaries.

E. KNF Ecological Sustainability Assessment Status: using the same process as the CNF, just on slightly different timelines.

#### F. Questions about Ecological Sustainability Assessment?

- Q: Scoping of Fire category?
- A: LANDFIRE was used because the information applies to all Forests and different jurisdictions so there would be consistency across the Southwest Region. Fire Regime Condition Class was estimated for vegetation types within the forest. Also looked at wildfire trends over time, and projected trends for fire risk in different vegetation types.
- Q: Where will the benefits of fire be discussed? It seems report/assessments only looks at negative threats? At what point will we be coming back together to discuss reports in further detail?
- A: The positive effects are assumed. The focus is on what is not working. In terms of further discussions...the point of today is to listen to your thoughts and ideas about next steps. The Assessment would not be ready for feedback until we incorporate changes from the Region.

#### G. CNF Economic and Social Sustainability Assessment

This assessment defined an area of analysis that included the counties contained in and abutting the Coconino. Economic portion determined the contribution of the CNF to the economy of the assessment area. IMPLAN, the Forest Service approved model, determined that the CNF has a 1.9% contribution to the local economy. The Assessment is currently available on the CNF website, the Forest is open to, and will consider public feedback. RO involvement and review will need to occur if we consider adjusting content due to user data and/or public feedback on the Assessment.

#### H. Questions about Economic and Social Sustainability Assessment?

- Q: What kind of proof is the Forest requiring for input?
- A: Any feedback given to the Forest must be backed up with scientific data
- Q: When will the Kaibab NF be accepting feedback on the assessment?
- A: Kaibab: The feedback period will run through the end of May.
- Q: Did the Kaibab consider the area north of Grand Canyon- in southern Utah? How are those being considered/included? IMPLAN?
- A: Kane and Washington Counties were included. IMPLAN was used.

#### I. CNF & KNF Special Areas

- Proposed special areas from the public are pending the Management Review of the Need for Change Report for the CNF.
- Some suggestions within Special Area proposals will likely become part of the desired conditions for the area rather than to create a new designation (both KNF and CNF).
- Apologies to CNF Special Areas working group; Forest Service may have involved them too early in revision process, which is why the wait for review is so long.

J. Need for Change (NFC) - will identify management direction (text) that needs to change within the current Forest Plan, based on: Economic and Social Sustainability Assessment, Ecological Sustainability Assessment, "Holes" or absences of complete information highlighted through the reformatting of the current plan, and public comments. It will reflect the suite of potential changes. There will be a review by the Forests' leadership teams of the Need for Change. Coconino Leadership Team will look at the list/description and decide what will be addressed at this time and therefore brought forward as a proposed revised plan. What is not addressed at this time may be able to be addressed through other mechanisms later, such as subsequent amendments. Forest Service will remain rule neutral when identifying NFC until we know which planning rule to use. NFC is a concept typically identified during our NEPA process as a basis for proceeding with subsequent analysis.

K. Reformatting of Current Plan: Consists of taking the entire current Forest Plan, including Standards/Guidelines, and reorganizing it into the 5 Forest Plan components: Desired Condition, Guidelines/Standards<sup>1</sup>, Special Areas, Suitability of Areas for various Uses, and Objectives. Reformatting also includes identifying parts of the current plan where the direction is inadequate for the new format. Many Standards/Guidelines in the current Plan describe desired conditions, though not all facets of the ecosystem or social characteristics are currently identified. Laws/Policy/Regulations that are written within

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<sup>1</sup> Because we do not know which rule will apply, we are using these terms interchangeably at this time.

the existing Forest Plan will not be in the revised Plan; there will be references to the Forest Service Directives as found in the Manual and Handbooks. As we provide the reformatted forest plan for review, it will be possible to track the current Forest Plan source of the text in the reformatted Forest Plan.

- L. Discussion outcomes regarding Need For Change, Planning Rules, Reformatting of Plan
- Forest will need to be clear that Need for Change is rule neutral (unless we have a planning rule in place when we start public feedback).
  - Alternative E may be the Planning Rule alternative selected. Alternative E was discussed (prohibitions, suitability of uses...). You may view the proposed new rule on the National Website ([http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/2008\\_planning\\_rule.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/2008_planning_rule.html))
  - Which rule the Coconino and Kaibab move forward with is largely dependent in the long run upon the new administration in Washington. There is internal Forest Service pressure to move forward with the soon to be released 2008 Planning Rule. The forests understand that there is public uncertainty with progressing with the 2008 Planning Rule, while there is certainty with moving forward under the 1982 Planning Rule. The forests have some influence over what rule they go with, but do not have the final decision, that is for the Regional Forester. Both forests are planning for an EIS at this time, standard NEPA, and this is reflected in the proposed timelines for both forests. There is room in the timeline for the EIS process, whichever rule the Forest Service goes forward with. There is public concern about the forests' ability to conduct an adequate analytical process.
- M. Organizational Changes
- Coconino - Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor- Kate Klein (January thru April), Acting Forest Supervisor- Joe Stringer (January thru April), New Forest Planner- Yewah Lau (Arriving mid-February), Planning Contractor- Katherine Farr (from the present to the arrival of Yewah Lau and some overlap)
  - Kaibab - Acting Director of Forestry and Forest Health – Mike Williams (late Jan January thru April), Acting Forest Supervisor –Ed Armenta (late January thru April), Retired Forest Planner currently serving forest as a Planning Contractor - Bruce Higgins, Retiring Core Revision Member - Russ Truman (late March 2008)
  - Region - New Regional Forester- Corbin Newman, and new Deputy Regional Foresters Faye Krueger and Gilbert Zepeda.
- N. Wilderness Suitability Analysis is being conducted concurrently with Forest Plan Revision. An initial inventory has been conducted.
- Points of Contact – Coconino - Jen Kevil (527-3418), Kaibab - Charlotte Minor (635-8271)

**3.) Discussion** - What's gone on so far? What could be improved? What would you like to see for level of public participation?

- A. Summary of Likes:
- Having meetings at different times to accommodate schedules
  - Availability of documents in various formats, such as web, CD, and hard copy

- Appreciate hard copy notification of meetings and in the future please-include meeting date and location information in the first sentence of letter
- B. Summary of what public would like to see and needs to change in all public participation documents and presentations:
- Provide definitions/glossary for terms and acronyms used
  - Release details/products earlier in process than was done with the first round of planning in the 1980's
  - Less personnel changeover during a revision process
  - Work with non-Forest Service organization to help with data and analysis
  - Concern with Forest Service use of flawed data in assessments, also concerned within validity and if it is representative of what is happening locally
  - Want to make sure that decisions are inclusive of a variety of information, in addition to data
  - Want data-based decisions, concern about anecdotal stories and slanted data
  - Would like more notification when assessments/reports are released to the public
  - Ensure that opportunity to comment is made available to the larger public
  - Have meeting (videoconference) to discuss Socioeconomic Sustainability Assessment
  - Use detailed subject lines in Forest Service emails
  - Use one Forest Service email sender identification to send out notifications (this is because some people set their personal e-mails with very tight)
  - More front end collaboration in order to make sure we remain on firm ground throughout the revision process. Reviewing the initial version of the reports is needed so that the remainder for the process is not potentially artificially constrained.
  - Increase outreach and use of media/technology: Channel 4 public access (only serves Flagstaff community with cable TV), call ins, email comments, National Public Radio
  - Improve collaboration with other agencies and organizations
  - Would like a punch list of rule neutral topics so we could understand what the FS is dealing with right now.
  - Establishing stakeholders and contacting all of them. Kaibab's Public Participation Plan contains 2005 language-in process of making neutral and will make available to public soon by posting on website.

**Question:** How will the Sustainability Assessments/data influence the Need for Change?

**Discussion:** The Need for Change will be a balance of information from assessments, public comments, and other products, and cannot say how much value/weight each Assessment will have during the Need for Change discussions.

See Coronado draft document for template that may be used by the CNF:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coronado/plan-revision/plan-revision-documents.shtml>

#### 4.) BREAK

#### 5.) Continuation of Action Scenario Development

What would you like to see for level of public participation? Would you be willing to participate above and beyond attending a public meeting?

**Question:** Is the Forest Service encouraging outside organizations to host meetings? What would the Forest Service provide?

The Prescott National Forest is using this model. Non-Forest Service organizations and individuals host meetings, and inform the Forest Service of how they go. It has encouraged

ownership- people have had more buy-in, more communication in the community, people are more invested in the process.

**Discussion:** This process works well with small communities (see Prescott model above), may work differently on Coconino. In smaller communities it is one group leading the meetings, in larger communities it is multiple groups working together. The Forest Service would provide support, data, consider providing facility and supplies. It is a model that could be applied to where we are in the process. Having the public undertake meeting logistics and organization would be helpful and would save FS Teams some time. Regardless of what planning rule the Forest Service is working under, the planning implementation process will continue after the revision is completed. The Coconino and Kaibab would like to have groups that are actively engaged at this level and think this would result in a more robust process. A variety of meeting sizes and forums, such as coffee klatches or stakeholder-hosted meetings, may facilitate people feeling free to voice their opinions.

**Question:** Has there been any organized effort for inholders to become involved in Forest Plan effort?

**Discussion:** Forest Service has not included all property owners that abut National Forest lands or all property owners within smaller surrounded parcels. We have relied on our permittee lists, existing mailing lists, outreach through media, and attendees at meetings to form our mailing lists.

**Question:** Will there be an offline discussion regarding cooperating agency status?

**Discussion:** To qualify as a cooperating agency, there are 3 requirements that must be met: 1.) Must be a government agency, 2.) bring something to the table to contribute to this process, such as specialized expertise, funding, or/and personnel, and 3.) a Planning Rule must be in place. Even if an agency meets all three, the agency still does not have to accept some requesting cooperating agency status.

**Question:** Could Forest Service meeting notes be made available to the public?

**Discussion:** Meeting notes are in project record and are available to the public upon request. The forests will explore the possibility of posting additional meeting notes on the website. Both forests will work on better maintaining their web calendar, informing the public of large interagency or public meetings. While the Forest Service wants to be open and lend transparency to the process, they also do not want to set up any false expectations about placing all meeting minutes or notifications on the web. There seems to be some general agreement that posting public meeting minutes would be doable from a Forest Service viewpoint and would not create a burden for interested people to review. FOIA may also play a role in terms of when and what could be placed on the web.

**Question:** Can the CNF create a questionnaire to distribute to the public at retail locations, such as bike shops? Improve transfer of information between the public and the forest?

**Discussion:** Yes. However, if the Forest does it, a questionnaire would need to be 5 questions or less and cannot be funded by the Forest Service (e.g. can't pay for return postage) but could be created by Forest Service. The original questions that were used at Round 1 & 2 public meetings Fall 2006 are still available on the CNF's website. It would be important that if questionnaires are distributed by retailers that they are also available to the general public.

### **Need for Change and Building Plan**

**Question:** What would you like to see for a forum for providing feedback regarding reports and other products?

**Discussion:** Some attendees would like “a product (plan) to throw darts at” while others would like to increase the amount of time to look at background documents as those will drive subsequent documents (plan and EIS). The Forest Service wants public involvement, but is also constrained by budgets and timelines. People do not want to see current timeline extended, but still want to make sure issues are addressed in iterative process. Some people were hesitant about committing to methods for feedback or setting up subsequent public meetings on assessments until they had read and evaluated the assessments. About 1/3 of attendees, including Fredonia and Phoenix, would be willing to assist the Forest Service in organizing/assisting Forest Service in Planning process beyond attending a meeting.

**Question:** Visions for participating in building the plan?

**Discussion:** Attendees had mixed feelings about involvement in building the plan. Some people wanted “a product (plan) to evaluate and shoot at.” Other participants would like to see more involvement in the earlier processes including the Need for Change, seeing the “holes”, and comparing current desired condition with revised/changed/new desired condition. People felt that interested parties are likely to be in 80% in agreement on topics for the Revised Plan; just the remaining 20% would be the points of debate and need more discussion. People wanted to focus their attention constructively on the points of contention and reach an outcome. Some would like to continue with former working groups and there is support for people to participate in additional discussions, thereby being able to partake in the process rather than just comment on a prepared document. Approximately 1/3 of all attendees, including Fredonia and Phoenix, were interested in participating in building the plan/developing alternatives phases.

## **6.) Meeting Evaluation and Wrap-up**

Meeting evaluation forms were circulated and collected after the meeting concluded.

Thank you for attending!

## **7.) Adjourn**