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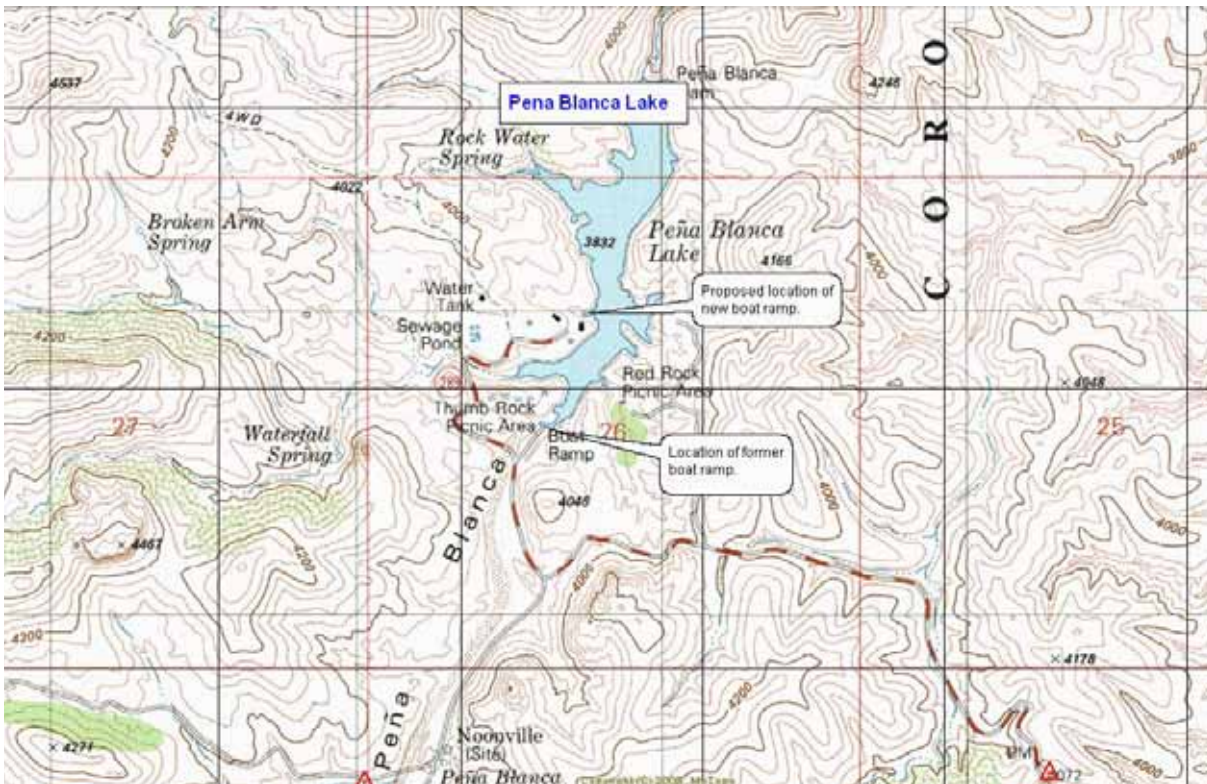
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SCOPING NOTICE AND OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

PROPOSED BOAT RAMP AND PARKING LOT RELOCATION PEÑA BLANCA LAKE

Dear Friends and Neighbors of the Coronado National Forest:

I am writing today to let you know about a proposed project at Peña Blanca Lake on the Nogales Ranger District. The Forest proposes to change the location of the boat ramp and associated parking lot at the Lake. The project site is located in Section 26, Township 23 South, Range 12 East, in Santa Cruz County, Arizona. The general location of the site and proposed new facilities are shown below.



We are about to begin a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of the proposed project by defining the scope of the impacts analysis. During scoping, we ask the public to help us identify issues and concerns related to the proposed action. Public input is vital because it is integrated into our environmental impacts analyses and may be used in the development of mitigation and alternatives to the proposed action. Information on how you can comment on this proposal or obtain further information is provided below.

BACKGROUND

Peña Blanca Lake is located in the Pajarito Mountains in Santa Cruz County, Arizona, about 14 miles west-northwest of Nogales, Arizona. The 50-acre lake was constructed in 1957 on National Forest System land by the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) as a *Federal Aid in Fisheries Restoration* project. It is operated as a recreational facility in accordance with the terms of a special-use permit issued to AZGFD in 1954. The lake was created behind a dam constructed within a steep-walled canyon in Peña Blanca Wash and is sustained by water rights held by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission.

In 1994, a mercury-contamination source was documented in the Lake's upper watershed. The mine that was the source of contamination was removed in 1999. Between February and July 2009, under the authority of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), mercury-contaminated sediment was removed from the Lake, the boat ramp, and a cement roadway extending from the parking lot in Peña Blanca Canyon to the lake. The following photos, which were taken between May and July 2009, illustrate the present disturbed nature of the proposed project site.

INSERT PHOTOS

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is needed to restore recreational use facilities at the Lake while it is devoid of water. Relative to AZFGD's special-use permit, the Forest Service proposes to authorize the AZGFD to construct fishing and recreational facilities on just over 1 acre at the Lake. The following facilities shown on the graphic below would replace and/or augment facilities that existed prior to the CERCLA remediation project:

- a new concrete boat ramp and dock, using the CERCLA project haul ramp as a base for the boat ramp. The portion of the proposed boat ramp extending into the water would be approximately 120 feet long by 20 feet wide. The portion above the high-water mark extending to the upper parking area would be paved.
- an Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant parking and turn-around area adjacent to the boat ramp, 100 feet by 100 feet in size. Concrete OR ASPHALT OR ?
- an upper paved parking area (concrete or asphalt) approximately 300 feet by 200 feet; and
- a (material?) sidewalk that connects the upper parking area and the boat ramp.



Funding for the project will be provided by the AZGFD, and construction will be done under contract to AZGFD. ??? The Forest Service would assume maintenance responsibility after construction is completed. The riparian area where the old boat ramp and driveway was located would be allowed to return to natural conditions.

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

The Coronado National Forest values public input during the NEPA review process. Your comments about this proposal may be submitted to us¹ in writing by U.S. mail, facsimile, or hand-delivery; electronically by email; and orally, by telephone or in person at the District office. To be most useful in our NEPA review, comments should be submitted to us within 15 calendar days following your receipt of this notice.

Our mailing address is Nogales Ranger District, 303 Old Tucson Road, Nogales, AZ 85621. Facsimiles may be sent to (520) 281-2396. Please include your full name and address and project title (Pena Blanca Boat Ramp) with your comments. Electronic (email) comments may be submitted to us at comments-southwestern-coronado@fs.fed.us. Please submit email comments in any of the following ways: text of your email, in a Microsoft Word (.doc) attachment, or in rich-text format (.rtf). Please include "Pena Blanca Boat Ramp" in the subject line.

Oral comments may be provided by telephoning me at (520) 761-6002 or by making a personal visit to the Nogales District Office.

For additional information about this project, please contact me at the number above or at kellest@fs.fed.us. Questions about the NEPA review process may be directed to Forest NEPA Coordinator Andrea W. Campbell at (520) 388-8352 or awcampbell@fs.fed.us.

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

Sincerely,

KENT C. ELLETT
NOGALES DISTRICT RANGER

¹ *Comments and personal information associated with them, such as names and addresses, become part of the Administrative Record of this NEPA review. This information may be made available to a third-party upon request under the authority of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Your personal information is protected by the Privacy Act. If you do not want it to be released under the FOIA, you may choose not to include it with your comments. Or, you may request an exemption from FOIA with your comment submittal. If so, you will be informed by the Forest Service as to whether or not your request qualifies for an exemption. If it does not, you may resubmit your comments without personal information or withhold them altogether.*