

# Tonto National Forest Forest Plan Revision

## What is a forest plan?

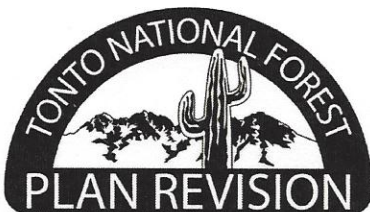
- A comprehensive plan to guide forest management over the next fifteen years
- A plan "to maintain and restore forest land and water ecosystems while providing for ecosystem services and multiple uses"
- Includes objectives, standards and guidelines for "desired conditions" to be achieved through land management
- Identifies areas that are or may be suitable for special designations such as research natural areas, wild and scenic rivers, and wilderness

## Where does the plan apply?

- Management direction applies on National Forest System land within the boundaries of Tonto National Forest
- The plan considers the goals, uses and resources of surrounding lands and surrounding communities ("all lands")

## Why revise now?

- National USFS policy requires plans be revised at least every 15 years



## Why does the revision process matter?

- As the 5<sup>th</sup> largest forest in the United States, the Tonto National Forest is one of the most-visited forests in the U.S.
- Decisions in this plan directly affect environmental health, economic vitality, and quality of life
- We will confirm what is working with the 1985 plan, and identify where there is a need for change

## What is the "new rule"?

The Forest Service recently adopted at the national level an improved process and direction for preparing or revising forest plans. Features include:

- A quicker, more streamlined and efficient four-year process
- A three phase process: assessment, revision, monitoring
- Enhanced commitment to collaboration and public engagement (across all three phases; new audiences including youth)
- "All lands" perspective
- Best available science; sustainability and "ecosystem services"
- Continued emphasis on multiple use management

## How can I participate?

- Attend public meetings and collaborative workshops
- Request information or sign up for the mailing list
- Provide comments and feedback at [tontoplan@fs.fed.us](mailto:tontoplan@fs.fed.us) or Tonto NF Plan Revision 2324 E. McDowell Rd. Phoenix, AZ 85006

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## Overview of Issues that Affect Fish and Wildlife Resources and Hunting/Angling

- If the plan addresses current wildlife habitat and recreational needs
- Does it provide for high quality habitat and maintenance of wildlife connectivity
- Strategies for wilderness that maintain a level of protection for wildlife habitat values but allowing for management flexibility
  - Creation of alternate access routes when existing designated access routes are closed across private land.
  - Aquatic management, which might include physical removal of noxious weeds, application of chemicals for weed or fish removal, stocking of fish, construction or reconstruction and maintenance of habitat structures in aquatic habitats, general access improvements, etc.
  - Wildlife surveys, sometimes by motorized vehicle, plane or helicopter, sometimes including the emplacement at remote monitoring stations of monitoring devices such as cameras, scent poles, etc.
  - Wildlife management, including introduction or removal of species, possibly including use of planes and helicopters, possibly including marking or collaring of animals and radio tracking of animals, use of motorized vehicles and equipment, development and maintenance of physical structures (e.g. bat gates or riparian exclosures).
  - Wildlife water development and maintenance, sometimes including motorized vehicle use, plane or helicopter use, and use of motorized equipment.
  - Stream renovation, including chemical removal of exotic fish and reintroduction of native fish, and possibly including development and maintenance of physical structures to help manage fish populations, monitoring of native fish populations.
  - Habitat management, which could include removal of exotic plant species, timber or fuel wood removal, brush removal, prescribed fire, etc.
- Any proposed wilderness boundary changes or additional areas.
- Consistency with MBGR and dispersed camping according to the TMP
- Alignment with Department strategic plans
- Social and economic values related to fish and wildlife related recreation
- Desired conditions that tie to landscape scale collaborative efforts and consider open spaces from a wildlife linkage, movement and migratory corridor perspective
- Recreational shooting opportunities
- Inclusion of the Species of Greatest Conservation Need
- Law enforcement (particularly as it relates to OHV and recreational shooting) as these are the two recreational activities currently having the most negative effect on natural and cultural resources
- Trespass livestock
- Sustainable recreation (fee schedule for the length of the plan?)
- Federal budget shortfalls continuing into the future and planning for such