

Comments about the Walnut Canyon Management Area in the revised Forest Plan

Please add the following four paragraphs of text to the section on the Walnut Canyon MA.

Each paragraph is followed by a note that provides some history or otherwise expands on the reason for the paragraph

Under **Desired Conditions**

Supplement to “Roads”

To protect cultural sites and to preserve habitat for disturbance-sensitive species, roads open to the public that currently run within one mile of the canyon rim will be gated shut or relocated. No new roads open to the public will intrude into a one-mile buffer zone around the canyon. For the purposes of this paragraph, the relevant part of the canyon extends eastward from Fisher Point to the eastern end of Walnut Canyon National Monument.

[Note. In fall 2001 or winter 2002, NPS Superintendent Sam Henderson requested of the Forest Service that public road access be eliminated in a buffer zone extending one mile from the rim of Walnut Canyon (not just from the WCNM boundary). (Comments on Proposed Action for FLEA, printed in DEIS for FLEA, August 2002, page 152.) The request has been reiterated by me many times. Honoring the request—at least as a “Desired Condition”—is long overdue.]

Under **Standards**

Acquisition of State Trust lands (as supplement to Lands Adjustment)

For the purpose of conservation, pursue purchase or land exchange options for the following State sections: 22, 28, 30, and the sliver of 10 that lies south of I-40, all in T21N R8E. Those sections were contained in the City of Flagstaff’s Arizona Preserve Initiative petition.

[Note. The acquisition goal cited above appears in Amendment 17, new page 206-112, of the current Forest Plan. The goal emerged from the Flagstaff/Lake Mary Ecosystem Analysis and was incorporated by amendment in December 2002. The sliver of section 10 was omitted inadvertently from the text, but its inclusion was subsequently recorded in the file folder—after I pointed out the omission to District Ranger Gene Waldrip. The acquisition goal was part of a standard in Amendment 17.]

Continued

Under **Guidelines**

Recreation (in general)

Walnut Canyon and its immediate surroundings form a uniquely precious area on the Coconino NF. Inside the canyon and within one mile of the rim, protection of cultural sites and preservation of habitat for disturbance-sensitive species will take precedence over recreation. Within the canyon, trail users will be strongly encouraged to stay on the trail.

[Note. The paragraph above is *not* intended to affect the current alignment or use of the Arizona National Scenic Trail or other trails in the Forest Service System. Rather, the paragraph looks ahead to population growth in Flagstaff and to requests for *additional* recreational opportunities.]

Dispersed Camping

The canyon ecosystem and Walnut Canyon National Monument are vulnerable to fires blown by a southwest wind from abandoned campfires. Consequently, dispersed camping will be prohibited for a distance of approximately three miles southward from the canyon rim along the canyon segment from Fisher Point to the eastern end of WCNM.

[Note. The canyon ecosystem and the scenic values of WCNM are irreplaceable in our lifetime—or in anyone’s lifetime. They should be protected from the risk of human-caused fires.]

Submitted by

Ralph Baierlein

Ralph Baierlein

4717 Hightimber Lane
Flagstaff, AZ 86004
Email: Ralph.Baierlein@nau.edu