

From: [Mark Spencer](#)
To: [Belsky, Kenna M -FS](#); [FS-R3 Tonto Plan Revision](#)
Cc: [Mark Spencer](#); [Tommy Thomason](#); [Rick Bosshardt](#); [Chris Nugent](#); [jiorio@jiorioinc.com](#); [Paul Pitkin](#); [Ron Normandeau](#); [Tim Riley](#); [Jardine, Kelly -FS](#); [Rumpza, Elizabeth - FS](#); [Brian Schober](#)
Subject: Re: [CAUTION: Suspicious Link]Tonto National Forest Plan Revision -- Upcoming Meetings for Forest Plan Revision - response
Date: Wednesday, February 5, 2020 6:49:49 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[USFS MOU Recreational Aviation Foundation Final.pdf](#)
[Tonto Plan Comments \(Mark Ron\) Rev 2020-2-04.pdf](#)

Hi Kenna and Beth,

Thanks for the note! I really appreciated the opportunity to get together with your team and other members of the public in Phoenix last week. I always learn something valuable at these engagements. My hat is certainly tipped to you and the team for all you do to help ensure the sustainability of our forests through careful planning!

Thank you in advance for considering our suggestions. I have updated our suggestions, see attached and please use this revised document going forward, primarily the introduction, but also a correction in one section line number, and the additions discussed in at the Phoenix meeting, excerpted here for convenience:

Management Approaches, Page 27:

06. Utilize collaborative partnerships where volunteers plan, lead, and execute a majority of motorized and non-motorized **trail infrastructure** maintenance.

Also added to the attached regarding page 134 for the plan, :

Guidelines (RWMA-G) Page 134:

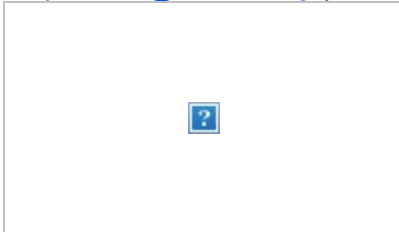
Management activities, including transplants (e.g., removal, reintroduction, or supplemental introduction) of wildlife species, should be permitted to use motorized and mechanical means (e.g., helicopter, **shortfield aircraft** landings) if necessary to perpetuate or recover a threatened or endangered species, to restore the population of an indigenous species, or to manage wildlife populations.

Lastly, and per my original email. We remain concerned that Grapevine airstrip is not mentioned as a formal airstrip in the **Draft Environmental Impact Statement Volume 1** page 229, along with Pleasant Valley, 24AZ. With its associated volunteer improvements totaling several hundred thousand dollars in value, these improvements, and subsequent charting with the FAA as AZ88, and the use it now enjoys for not only recreation, but by multiple governmental agencies including the USFS and US Air Force, this seems to be an oversight. You had mentioned that it would require input from others on the Forest Team, and we would gladly participate in conversations with anyone necessary to see this change in the EIS.

Please also see the attached MOU between the USFS and the RAF as this, along with the willing team at the Tonto, lays the groundwork for the collaboration we've enjoyed thus far

with the Tonto.

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The Recreational Aviation Foundation preserves, maintains, and creates airstrips for recreational access.

On Fri, Jan 31, 2020 at 11:55 AM Belsky, Kenna M -FS <kenna.belsky@usda.gov> wrote:

Hey Mark – It was nice to see you again at the technical partner meeting, it has been a while. The planning team will be working to incorporate feedback into the draft plan and your comments will be really helpful. We will also be working with leadership to determine some of those changes so we will keep you in the loop on those discussions.

I have passed along the comments you gave me at the meeting to Beth as I will be on maternity leave soon. We look forward to working with you guys more through the process and let us know if you have any additional follow ups.



Kenna Belsky

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Caring for the land and serving people

From: Mark Spencer [mailto:m Spencer@theraf.org]

Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2020 10:43 AM

To: Jardine, Kelly -FS <kelly.jardine@usda.gov>

Cc: Mark Spencer <m Spencer@theraf.org>; Belsky, Kenna M -FS <kenna.belsky@usda.gov>; Tommy Thomason <tethomason@azpilots.org>; Rick Bosshardt <rick@azpilots.org>; Chris Nugent <chris@azpilots.org>; jiorio@iorioinc.com; Paul Pitkin <pitkinpaul@gmail.com>; Ron Normandeau <rnormandeau@theraf.org>; Tim Riley <triley@theraf.org>

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Hi Kelly,

Thanks for chiming in! I understand and agree on the closed road issue. Use of closed roads would make sense only if some sort of low impact access to a roadless area was a desired goal. In a much more stringent model, airstrips in several wilderness areas in the northwestern states, for example, bring administrative and recreational access to the interior of these areas resulting in further dispersion of activities in these wilderness areas. People who have hiked the more common foot, mule, or equestrian access routes into wilderness areas would likely understand the need to offer alternative methods of access to the interior of wilderness areas. Again, we understand that any motorized access to a roadless area may not be a goal, but if it were left an option, it may come in handy from time to time. Certainly not a sticking point from our community however.

Mark Spencer- Arizona State Liaison

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On Tue, Jan 21, 2020 at 9:14 AM Jardine, Kelly -FS <kelly.jardine@usda.gov> wrote:

Mark, thanks for catching that omission of Grapevine Airstrip in the Plan. I thought it was addressed in the first go-round. I agree with the suggested verbiage. One of the suggested items, we will need to talk more on. The one about using closed roads for landing. When we do close a road, the only way we can achieve compliance in the future will be through complete obliteration and naturalization at the beginning, end and all intersections. This may make portions or all of certain closed routes unusable for aircraft. The remainder of your suggested wording is Okay with me. Thanks -=kj=-



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Caring for the land and serving people

From: Mark Spencer [mailto:mspencer@theraf.org]

Sent: Friday, January 17, 2020 4:24 PM

To: Belsky, Kenna M -FS <kenna.belsky@usda.gov>

Cc: Tommy Thomason <tethomason@azpilots.org>; Rick Bosshardt <rick@azpilots.org>; Chris Nugent <chris@azpilots.org>; jiorio@iorioinc.com; Paul Pitkin <pitkinpaul@gmail.com>; Jardine, Kelly -FS <kelly.jardine@usda.gov>; Ron Normandeau <rnormandeau@theraf.org>; Tim Riley <triley@theraf.org>

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Questions: Spam.Abuse@usda.gov

Hi Kenna,

I hope this email finds you well!

I am very sorry, but I have conflicts with pretty much every meeting scheduled in the recent email. I was hopeful that perhaps I could swing by the Supervisor's office and sit down with you on January 28th or 29th as I will be in Phoenix those days. **PLEASE LET ME KNOW!**

We've read the proposed plan, and have some comments, but I should say up front that we believe there are two ways of addressing our concerns, one is to sort of a piece meal approach where aviation is inserted in areas where other modes of recreation are delineated, and the other, perhaps a more organized approach is to simply add an aviation specific section. Please see attached and let me know what you think! We feel that the addition of at least one or two of our suggested verbiage is critical in order to provide authorization of aviation in future travel planning activities.

Apart from the attached, one thing that really stands out is in the **Draft Environmental Impact Statement Volume 1**. This mentions, on page 229, "The Pleasant Valley Airstrip located in Young, AZ is the only one that is officially part of the Tonto National Forest transportation infrastructure..." It seems that Grapevine, now being officially charted as AZ88, and the use this now very popular airstrip it enjoys between the USFS, USAF, and recreational aviation community, it should be considered along with Pleasant Valley, 24AZ, as part of the formal infrastructure.

We'd also like something like this added "all airstrips on the Tonto National Forest, regardless of status, are being maintained by user group volunteers and private donations..." This is such nice model and success story, seems it would make sense to mention it.

We've taken a serious look at the draft plan and have attached the following document detailing our suggested changes involving aviation. The bottom line is we appreciate what you and the planning team are doing, and we want to provide meaningful input.

On the meetings, I believe we'll have various members of the RAF and board members of the Arizona Pilot's Association present, but we will all be working from this email and attached as far as our suggestions.

Thanks in advance for your consideration of our efforts to date and suggestions here!

Mark Spencer- Arizona State Liaison

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