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Comments: comments from Popelish on the Desired Conditions for Forest Plan Revision

I hope you find these comments helpful--that is the spirit in which they are sent.

Text of attachment copied here for coding purposes. Please see attachment:

Generall commend this effort. I can see from the draft Desired Conditions that the revised plan will provide much better guidelines for FS employees to manage the Forest. Please note that to save my and your time, I am not commenting on all the many paragraphs I found to be well-written and clear.

pg 1-2Mt.Taylor and Zuni Mtns Landscape Team Vision StatementsSome of these comments seem a little odd for management--did the team include FS personnel and consist of a consensus of FS and other groups and agencies, or just the latter? I did not feel this was stated clearly. Will internal FS views about vision be included in the final? P. 2 line 7-11: In my experience, OHV abuses have shown that access must be managed for resources to be available to future generations. I think this should be a more definite part of the vision statement (not just in "special mgmt. areas"). P. 2-Line 12-16: Is the Forest's vision/management policy actually to encourage extraction industries? Encourage seems not the right word here.

pg 4graphic about different scales for vegetation analysisI found this graphic somewhat confusing and think it needs some more explanation to be clearly understandable. Maybe adding acres represented under Landscape, Mid-scale and Fine-scale would help, or at least "One Stand" under Mid-scale and "Groups of Trees(?)" under Fine-scale.

pg 522Water RightsSays Water Rights included in this section but I did not see anything about that topic.

pg 55, 58line 14 and 1,18,20use of word "natural"

Watersheds, Terrestrial SpeciesSpecific definition of this word is needed. What time period does it refer to and why? Is a "natural and nearly complete assemblage of native plants and animals" referring to before Anglo use of the area, before any human use of the area? Assemblages have changed all through geologic time. What are you using as baseline for the desired assemblages and what is the justification?

pg 59line 9,28desirable non-native speciesThese two lines seem contradictory.

pg 59,60line 35-36, 15air qualityIs there a desired condition for the effect of atmospheric pollutants on ecosystem structure and function?

pg 62,63, 71, 73 line7,2,4, 11,2use of word "sustainable" in many areasIs this defined for the various places it is used? What is sustainable livestock grazing for example? Is this in an economic sense, a natural resources sense?

pg 62line 12range improvementsI suggest that a desired condition for range improvements is that their construction is minimized and they are built only as truly needed for proper livestock management. Further, a desired condition is the removal of no longer used fencing and other facilities.

pg 62 line19native plant communitiesIs this on grazed land?

pg 62line 12water developments, Range and GrazingProviding artificial water sources for livestock, esp. when there is drought, does not seem to be a good practice for management of vegetation/soils. It might allow more domestic (and wild) animal use than the range can sustain. What is Range's desired condition about the development of artificial water sources?

pg 63line 9Forest productsI strongly feel that enforcement needs to be addressed here. For instance, "Permit regulations are enforced. Damage to resources and littering does not occur." Illegal wood hauling in my area appears to be really increasing and newly-made 2-track haul roads are eroding (major problem). Littering, for instance where there is pinyon nut picking, is also a problem in some cases (more minor problem).

pg 63line 15natural processes, Forest productsDoes this mean the desired condition is to allow insects and disease to continue "naturally" without any intervention?

pg 65line 17Cultural and Historic Resources and Uses-additional desired conditionsSuggested additional desired conditions: 1-- (to intersect with Facilities p. 78, 34-36) "Heritage resources used as administrative sites or recreational residences have Preservation Maintenance Plans in place and are administered in accordance with those plans". 2)-"The benefits of cultural resource protection and the understanding of historic processes and events-- benefits that lie in the social, economic, and ecological sustainability realms-- are understood by managers and the public". (Similar to Wilderness p. 74, line 30).

pg 65 line27Historic resources inventoried at broad scaleI heartily agree. I would add "This data is accessible, analyzed, and used for planning purposes."

pg 65 line30-32rec areas that include historic propertiesI would add after "have historic and/or cultural values," :those values are preserved so that. . .the . . . qualities contribute. . .
Also-does infrastructure here include recreational residences?

pg 67 line25coal leasingDoes this mean to date? at the present time?

pg 68line 5-7dv. Of mineral resourcesI do not understand this. How would development of mineral resources not contribute? Is this statement trying to say commodities that aren't meeting markets shouldn't be developed?

pg 68 line12-14mneral resource usesI don't see how this is a desired condition. Seems to be just a statement of fact.

pg 68 line21mineral developments and scenic valuesIs there stronger wording than "to the extent practicable"? Does a law/regulation define this?

pg 68 line22-24 and 25-26mneral materialsI suggest replacing "are available" with something like "are managed in accordance with supply" to try to get at the idea that there is some type of "sustainable" management of these resources, not just that they are always made available.

pg 68 line29-30Historic minesI would insert "significant" in front of historic mines; I do not think the Forest wants to be committed to protecting all mines.

pg 70 line3-4site-specific reclamation plansCultural and historic resources should be included after are appropriate for. . . .

pg 71 line22-25connecting public with pastI applaud this desired condition! (I would start the sentence with "The Forest's").

pg 72 line2-6Developed Recreation backgroundA suggestion is to include description of free and fee-based developed recreation areas across the Forest.

pg 72 line18-18facility deteriorationI would like to see inclusion of a phrase such as damage is "prevented by timely maintenance or else mitigated where needed" or something about "maintenance being done on schedule".

pg 73 line3trails and resourcesPlease include cultural and historic resources here.

pg 73 line14-15compliance with MVUMSI guess you might think of enforcement as a tool but I would like to see "adequate enforcement exists" added here since that, in my opinion, is a desired condition (in a # of arenas!) which is not currently being achieved.

pg 76 line36user associations (special uses)It would be valuable to include recreational residences as having user associations in this desired condition.

pg 76 line38research (special uses) impactsPlease include "or impact cultural and historic resources" in second sentence.

pg 78 line26-30amount of facilities right-sizedThis desired condition seems to be meshing two different ideas: 1) accessibility and 2) right-sized facilities based on space utilization evaluation. I would like to see something further defined than the phrase "where practical". I am in favor of using historic facilities as much as possible because of their added value (as is noted in lines 34-36).

pg 78line 34-46use of historic facilitiesI suggest replacing "are available" with: "actively used for" and adding "in accordance with their Preservation Maintenance Plans.

pg 82-93GlossarySuggestions for additions to the Glossary that would help me to easily have access to terms in the Desired Conditions document are: Anthropogenic, Cultural and historic resources and uses, Historic characteristics, Keystone species, Narrow endemics (p. 58), Near natural fire regime, Refugia (p. 58), Early, mid, late seral stages, Tree basal area, Uneven aged stands, and Wilderness study area. Perhaps these are in the Glossary for earlier chapters?

GeneralLight-years ahead of the existing Forest Plan. I appreciate the effort of all the teams involved.