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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the AZT comprehensive plan. I have been involved with the trail since my first volunteer event sometime in the late 1990's to current ATA board member and nearly full time volunteer.

I am impressed with the amount of work and thought evident in the plan. All involved are to be congratulated. My comment:

Shooting Areas

A national scenic trail, to which we invite users from all over the world, should not be within earshot of shooting ranges. We in the American West take recreational shooting as a fact of life, it's what some people do. This acceptance is not universal among trail users. Trail users post on social media about their fear-terror is not too strong a word-when they hear gunfire in an otherwise pristine setting. Even to someone familiar with it, hearing rapid and continuous gunfire while hiking is unsettling. Intellectually one knows it's likely innocent but there is always that lingering doubt that something is dreadfully wrong. Guns and the proliferation of guns are hot topics worldwide, the AZT should stay out of this issue.

The plan should call for a minimum distance between shooting areas and the trail of at least a mile, preferably 3-5 miles. It is probably easier to move a shooting area than to move the trail, but either option should be a priority.