

Mission+InterimSOPFinal

1 December 2006

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## **CORONADO PLANNING PARTNERSHIP**

**Mission Statement  
Interim Statement of Principles**

**1 December 2006**

**MISSION STATEMENT**  
**Coronado Planning Partnership**

The Coronado Planning Partnership promotes the protection of wild species, their habitats, and ecological communities, as well as the processes that sustain them, on the Coronado National Forest. To accomplish this goal for the benefit of future generations, the Partnership (1) mobilizes a wide range of individuals and groups on behalf of our shared stake in the Forest, to ensure conservation-based management; and (2) provides and fosters leadership in the oversight of the revised Forest Plan: its development, outcome, implementation, and long-term monitoring.

## **INTERIM DRAFT**

### **STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES: Section on Management Recommendations Coronado Planning Partnership**

#### **Adaptive Management**

*Implement the Forest Plan in the context of adaptive management, as mandated by the 2005 National Forest System Land Management Planning Rule.*

*Follow these guidelines for adaptive management<sup>1</sup>: (1) establish and clear and common purpose, (2) design an explicit model of the system, (3) develop a management plan that maximizes results and learning, (4) develop a monitoring plan to test assumptions, (5) implement management and monitoring plans, (6) analyze data and communicate results, and (7) use results to adapt and learn. Value management failures by learning from mistakes and creating a safe-fail environment.*

#### **Adjacent Land Uses**

*Incorporate into the management plan the potential future consequences of existing private development immediately adjacent to the Forest.*

*Use land-use data and models to anticipate the impacts of development-prone, but currently undeveloped, land between Ecosystem Management Areas on the Forest.*

*Foster public-private partnerships that will lead to landscape-level conservation through coordination of land use across Forest boundaries.*

*Encourage good stewardship among private landowners on holdings adjacent to the Forest. Promote their active participation in restoration, including the enlisting of volunteers to aid them in these endeavors.*

*Plan at the watershed level, considering climatic range of variation and projected human population growth. Take into account the potential impacts of any project on the entire watershed and its aquifers. Protect and enhance the quality of subsurface and surface waters, recognizing that they are linked systems integral to the health of ecological communities and downstream users.*

#### **Cultural Resources**

*Protect historic and prehistoric cultural resources that have been identified to date.*

*Work closely with Tribes, nongovernmental organizations, and other experts to identify and protect additional cultural resources.*

## **Drought**

*Use drought conditions (rather than the “average year”) as the benchmark for setting conservative management thresholds.*

## **Ecological Restoration**

*Promote restoration of ecosystem components and processes; consider and challenge threats that originate outside, as well as inside, Forest boundaries.*

*Restore riparian areas, forests, and grasslands to provide necessary ecosystem processes for species and habitats. Include the restoration of native predation (species and relationships). For areas to be restored, set priorities that are based on ecological integrity.*

*Close nonsystem roads as well as system roads that already have been removed from the transportation network; restore roadbeds and drainage patterns to natural conditions.*

*Support and promote reintroduction of native species, including predators, that have been extirpated from the Coronado National Forest.*

## **Economic/Ecological Compatibility**

*Recognize both the direct and the indirect benefits to local economies of healthy watersheds, forests, and wildlife habitat.*

*Factor the socioeconomic benefits of wildlands (ecological/environmental services) into all cost/benefit analyses for desired conditions on the Forest.*

*Ensure that revenues received from economic uses of the Forest are not considered a justification for continuation of those uses.*

*Accommodate traditional economic uses of the Forest only when compatible with the long-term integrity of natural and cultural capital.*

*Incorporate, where possible, management funding from innovative economic sources (for example, public-private partnerships, cost-sharing agreements, and cross-Forest cooperation on efforts like ecological monitoring).*

## **Fire and Fuels Management**

*Incorporate the role of fire as a natural ecological process into all management planning.*

*Promote widespread application of prescribed burns as a tool for both fuels reduction and forest restoration.*

*Implement appropriate suppression responses (contain, confine, and control strategies) for wildfires.*

Ensure that *firefighting, where necessary, makes protection of habitat and wildlife the greatest priority when conducting suppression activities.*

*Restrict mechanical thinning to system roads except in extraordinary circumstances where human life or habitat loss is at risk.*

*Educate property owners on the need to take primary responsibility for maintaining a defensible space around their structures.*

### **Land Exchanges**

*Avoid land exchanges that would consolidate small Forest inholdings into large blocks of private property, within or on Forest boundaries, which would then be cost-effective for development (e.g., Lone Mountain).*

### **Livestock Grazing**

*Manage the extent and intensity of livestock grazing on Forest lands so that this practice is compatible with long-term ecological health and ecosystem integrity.*

Ensure that *permitted use does not exceed the lands' capacity* and suitability for livestock grazing and does not harm the sustained productivity of the Forest. In cases where the threshold has been exceeded, rapidly implement all strategies for recovery, including rest, and then adjust livestock management to meet objectives.

*Base management decisions on quantitative monitoring* conducted at regular intervals, with an emphasis on methods specifically designed to meet all resource objectives.

*Limit livestock use in riparian areas and the habitats of imperiled species* where such use conflicts with watershed health and recovery goals.

Allow for *voluntary retirement of grazing allotments and extended nonuse* for resource protection.

*Minimize the impacts of range developments* on wildlife.

### **Management Capacity**

*Ensure that adequate funding will be available for any management strategy* included in the Forest Plan. Assert the need for U.S. Government allocations.

*Strengthen law enforcement* to prevent damage to ecological and economic values of the Forest.

*Increase size and improve deployment of Forest Service staff* (“more boots on the ground”) who are not law enforcement officers (e.g., rangers, maintenance staff).

*Prohibit uses with high impact and high probability of violations* in any area where the capacity for observation and intervention is inadequate.

*Improve communication about activities proposed on the Forest* either by the Forest Service or by private-sector interests. Ensure that local and regional stakeholders have the opportunity to provide information and comments at the initial stage of each proposal.

## **Mexico-USA Border**

*Control or mitigate damage caused by **all** activities related to undocumented human immigration across the international border.* Recognize that interdiction efforts, as well as the actions of immigrants and smugglers, lead to significant harm to the Forest’s ecological values.

*Keep the international border permeable to wildlife.* Prevent the construction of a border wall on Forest lands.

*Strengthen interagency cooperation* to confront the problems associated with undocumented immigration and interdiction: e.g., new roads and trails, wildfires, livestock damage to riparian areas because fences have been cut, trash dumping.

## **Mining**

Ensure that mine plans and permitted mines exceed minimum standards in reducing damage and protecting the ecosystem resource.

*Identify areas* of the Forest that, because of their outstanding biological, cultural, or scenic values, are *incompatible with any form of mining*. *Permanently withdraw these areas* from mineral entry.<sup>2</sup>

Require any new mines proposed in the Forest to *demonstrate that they will minimize adverse environmental impacts to surface resources*.<sup>3</sup> Exercise discretion under current law to deny a mine that does not minimize impacts.

Work with the Bureau of Land Management to *perform validity exams* for all new mining proposals.

*Perform a Surface Use Determination* for all proposed mining operations.

Ensure that *reclamation plans* for all new and existing mining operations are complete and *will restore the area to a functioning ecosystem*. As part of the reclamation plan, require a backfilling of the pit alternative during the EIS process. Also require full and liquid bonding at a level that would fund third-party reclamation if needed.

## **Motorized Recreation**

*Limit motorized access* to areas where damage to natural and cultural resources will be minimal.

*Revise management zones* so that access is closed to areas where wildlife habitat, ecology, and behavior are disrupted. Pay particular attention to sensitive areas, such as land near archeological sites and habitat for threatened, endangered, or sensitive species, among others.<sup>4</sup>

*Enforce existing regulations* that prohibit cross country travel and off-highway vehicle (OHV) use in restricted areas such as washes and special closure areas.

## **Quiet Recreation**

*Adopt a road/trail ratio* that reflects the needs of wild species and communities, as well as those of muscle-powered human users.

*Construct trails to a standard* for user-specific needs.

*Convert nonsystem roads to hiking/equestrian trails* where appropriate.

*Prohibit the creation of wildcat trails. Reverse the trend toward increasing damage* to the Forest's trails from overuse or inappropriate use; take into account slope, soils, and other limitations.

*Control numbers of users* in areas of high impact. *Regulate commercial rockclimbing, equestrian use, and mountain biking*, to minimize harm to biodiversity and cultural resources.

## **Research, Inventory, Monitoring, and Education**

*Base management decisions on the results of ecological monitoring* (i.e., employ adaptive management).

*Strengthen ecological research, compile baseline and periodic inventory, and monitor progress toward conservation goals* on Forest lands. Enlist both Forest Service staff and external professional and citizen scientists in these studies.

*Promote more ecosystem-level research/inventory/monitoring*, over longer timeframes. Move beyond "project clearance research." Standardize protocols, to the extent reasonable, for scientific investigation on the Forest.

*Communicate the results* of these inquiries to a wide range of audiences, including scientists, Forest neighbors, and other stakeholders. *Use education tools* to apply these results to real-life problems and issues within the Forest.

Ensure that *human ecology and culture* are among the disciplines under investigation.

## Roadless Areas

Expand the Forest's *network of roadless areas* beyond those identified in the Inventory of Roadless Areas (IRA) and through the Governor's petition process.

Refine and expand *boundaries* of existing roadless areas through road closures to reflect conservation needs.

Protect *uninventoried roadless areas* through appropriate management zoning.

*Establish a rigorous method for road inventory* that addresses concerns raised by flaws in the previous IRA process.<sup>5</sup>

## Special Management Areas

Work with stakeholders to *identify and create more Special Management Areas* and ensure that (1) they are of a *significant size and number* for proportional representation of habitat types and special or unique vegetative communities, (2) they represent *potential natural communities* (late seral condition) to the greatest extent possible, and (3) provide and maintain *habitat for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species*.

*Recognize that habitat types are a complex mosaic* of intergrading and interconnected vegetative communities that result in, and maintain, biological (including genetic) diversity.

*Select entire small drainages (subwatersheds)* to ensure functional conservation areas.

Act on the Forest Service mandate to *designate Research Natural Areas that include each habitat type* on the Forest. Align the designation of habitat types with the results of the vegetation classification in the Southwest Forest Assessment Project while recognizing the complexity and diversity within these types.

Designate *new Zoological and Botanical Areas* in sectors with unusual biodiversity value.

*Adapt management* of Special Management Areas to *site-specific needs*.

## Technology Installations on High-elevation Sites

*Prevent the development of any new technology installations* (cell phone towers, electronic sites, astrophysical installations) on sites at high elevation on the Coronado National Forest.

*Analyze the ecological and socioeconomic costs and benefits of any existing technology installations* at high elevations on the Coronado. As a result of this analysis, consider whether these installations should remain operational.

## Transportation System

Designate the *minimum transportation network* that is consistent with the Travel Management Rule.

*Enforce the restriction of travel to routes designated on the Forest use map.* Ensure that the map is widely posted and distributed.

Retain the *current road-density standard* of no more than one mile of road per square mile of Forest; ensure that Wilderness and IRA acreage are excluded from this calculation for each Ecosystem Management Area, as well as across the Forest.

*Initiate a large-scale program for necessary road closures* (at least 1,000 miles at present) across the Forest.

Lower existing road density by closing

- *redundant or unnecessary system roads,*
- *system roads that are causing significant damage* to natural and cultural values, and
- *all nonsystem roads,* unless a nonsystem road can be substituted for a system road to the benefit of habitat conservation.

### **Utility Corridors**

*Prevent the establishment of utility corridors* in areas of the Forest where biological, cultural, and landscape values would be harmed.

*Protect scenic landscapes* from clearing and infrastructure for utilities.

### **Viewsheds**

*Maintain and protect the viewsheds* for which the Forest is famous. *Prevent any activity that would compromise* substantially or permanently the visual, habitat, or air quality of these viewsheds.

Work with adjacent private landowners to *protect areas off the Forest.*

### **Visitation Management**

Use demographic information on human populations in the region surrounding the Forest to *predict growth trends and potential impacts on the Forest.*

*Assess and address management concerns at existing hotspots* for visitation pressure on the Forest.

*Set reasonable thresholds* for all human uses of Forest lands. *Manage uses* so that they fall within those limits. *Initiate management strategies that anticipate future visitation pressure.*

*Contain visitation with high impact within specific management zones* where ecological value is low. Consider closures and permit systems to manage access to these zones.

### **Volunteers and Site Stewards**

*Improve opportunities for individuals and nongovernmental organizations to volunteer* their services for the Forest. Foster direct contributions from individuals by managing (or supporting an NGO's management of) a strong volunteer program.

*Enlist volunteer site stewards* as part of the "more boots on the ground" strategy for increasing the Forest Service's presence on the land.

### **Wildlife Corridors**

*Assess and protect landscape linkages* that allow unrestricted movement of wildlife among mountain ranges and among habitat patches on the Forest.

*Coordinate with other public agencies* (e.g., transportation authorities) to integrate wildlife corridors into all landscape-level conservation and management plans.

### **Wild Species and Habitats**

Identify, protect, and, if necessary, *manage habitat for all wild, native species* so that they persist over large scales of time and space.

Ensure that *threatened and endangered species and their habitats are protected* in accord with the Endangered Species Act and other legislation. Expand *protection for sensitive species*.

*Control or eliminate invasive and exotic species* that pose a threat to natives and their communities. Ensure that management activities and permitted uses do not contribute to nonnative species invasions on the Forest.

### **Wilderness Suitability**

Protect *existing Wilderness areas* against degradation (e.g., road incursions). Strengthen current management, including signage; include rapid closure of illegal roads.

Identify *other areas of the Forest with wilderness character* and manage these areas to retain those characteristics permanently.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Salafsky, N., R. Margoluis, and K. Redford. 2001. Adaptive management: a tool for conservation practitioners. Biodiversity Support Program, Washington, DC.

<sup>2</sup>Areas to be examined for withdrawal include, but are not limited to, National Historic Places, Native American sacred sites, eligible National Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness Study Areas, Special Management Areas, lands managed as roadless areas, Endangered Species habitat, and areas with important water resources.

<sup>3</sup>This demonstration is required under 36 CFR 228. Impacts to be considered, for both proposed and existing mines, should include extent and degree of surface disturbances, as well as hydrologic impacts (surface and subsurface, in both short and long terms, on site and off site). The entire watershed, not just the mine site, should be included in the hydrologic analysis, to determine offsite impacts to surface waters. Adverse impacts to the aquifer due to groundwater pumping and leaching for mining operations should be cause for denial.

<sup>4</sup>See attachment (Appendix A, *Planning Pathways: A Citizen's Guide to Controlling Off-Road Vehicle Use on Public Lands*, created by Wildlands CPR, [www.wildlandscpr.org](http://www.wildlandscpr.org)) for additional areas of public lands where motorized access should be prohibited.

<sup>5</sup>For the previous inventory of roadless areas on the Coronado National Forest, the Forest Service used the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum to evaluate suitability. This recreation model, which created a buffer strip of one-half mile on either side of mapped roads, was never intended to serve the purpose of roadless inventory. Both because the model was inappropriate and because the base route map used was inaccurate (for example, it showed roads that did not exist on the ground), the resulting inventory carved parcels out of Wilderness Areas and excluded suitable areas from potential roadless designation.

## Appendix A

### ***PLACES OFF-ROAD VEHICLES DON'T BELONG***

Presently, the American public believes that there is a place for ATVs, dirt bikes, snowmobiles, and other off-road vehicles on public lands. The majority of Americans also believe that the use of these high-impact machines is not appropriate everywhere. There are many types of public land which should be off-limits to off-road vehicles:

- 1) Designated Wilderness, Research Natural Areas, citizen or agency proposed wilderness, wilderness study areas, roadless areas, and other lands with wilderness character.
- 2) Rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, beaches, wash bottoms, and areas within 200 feet of a riparian area.
- 3) Critical habitat for endangered, threatened sensitive and, seasonally, fawning ground and critical winter and summer range for big game species.
- 4) On routes with the capacity to deliver moderate to high levels of sediment to streams, with slopes prone to failure, that traverse areas with a high probability of frequent flooding flows, or areas covered by highly erodible and otherwise fragile soils including volcanic-based soils and soils potentially bearing biological soil crusts.
- 5) Off designated routes – i.e. unimpeded cross-country travel.
- 6) On redundant routes – i.e. multiple routes that access roughly the same “point B” from the same “point A.”
- 7) On trails, in areas, and in watersheds traditionally used by hikers, skiers, horseback riders, mountain bikers, hunters, or other quiet recreationists and sportsmen, particularly those routes where unmanaged recreation has led to motorized encroachment on non-motorized trails.
- 8) Areas containing archaeological finds and cultural and historic sites.
- 9) On unplanned, unengineered, or user-created routes.
- 10) On routes that climb directly up erodible hillsides.
- 11) On routes that were installed for a project-specific purpose and were not decommissioned in compliance with the National Forest Management Act or applicable contracts.
- 12) On routes that are already gated, bermed, re-vegetated, being naturally reclaimed, and/or are closed to public vehicular traffic.

- 13) On routes where evidence indicates motorized vehicle use may be conflicting with reproduction, nesting, or rearing of native plant or wildlife species of concern, including native species whose populations and/or habitat are declining.
- 14) On routes documented as contributing to the spread of exotic species.
- 15) On routes that are exclusively for administration or maintenance of water developments, (for wildlife, livestock, or culinary use) power lines, ground return telephone lines, electronic facilities, gravel pits, sno-tel sites and other administrative uses.
- 16) On routes that are associated with, or lead to, areas with a history of unsuccessful mitigation or prevention of unauthorized off-road vehicle activity and resource damage.
- 17) On routes in watersheds with already high road densities (>1.0 miles per square mile.)