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Flagstaff Ranger District

Outfitter-Guide Needs Assessment



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Forest
Service

Coconino
National Forest

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Executive Summary

Through analysis of visitor use, current outfitter-guide use, demand, and evaluation of the benefits of activities for which the public could use an outfitter-guide, this needs assessment provides a framework for managers to determine where public and agency need exists for additional commercial services.

Results of this analysis showed that visitors pursue different activities across the district as a function of terrain, proximity to urban areas and access. Opportunities for outfitted services vary greatly as well. There is a high percentage of local, unguided use close to communities, and many areas where forest and private lands are adjacent, causing conflicts between users.

Only a few activity types (day horseback rides, backcountry skiing/snowboarding, rock climbing and shuttle service) showed a high need, based on an evaluative criteria ranking. The majority of activities showed a moderate or lower need. This indicates that in some areas adequate outfitter-guide services are being offered or that there is low demand, easy access and capability of visitors to pursue activities on their own. However, some activities (mountain biking, for example) are experiencing a high demand although the overall need was ranked as moderate. In those cases, the District must decide if allowing additional outfitters would meet the public and agency need in spite of the lower need ranking. In Wilderness, there were several activities that showed a moderate need, but none that showed a higher need.

Analysis of the current situation indicates that a unique situation appears to exist on this district. There appears to be less need or demand for outfitter-guides as there is for recreation events, both for guided, competitive events and non-commercial group use (activities that involve 75 participants or more, thus requiring a special use permit). Currently, managerial capacity is being taken up by administering this type of workload. It is anticipated that these types of requests will continue to increase, due to proximity to large, urban areas, the athletic nature of a segment of the population, and the church-going groups and family gatherings who prefer to stage events with a high number of attendees. Determining appropriate levels of use for this type of activity is difficult, since each requested event is very different in nature. In most cases, each must be evaluated in terms of appropriateness and impacts to resources. A suggested framework is included in this analysis.

Introduction

Providing recreation services and facilities is a key part of the Forest Service mission. To fulfill this responsibility, the agency relies upon many private, volunteer, organizational, and commercial partners. These partners, in turn, contribute their unique talents, equipment, financial resources, and technical capabilities. Although many visitors possess the necessary knowledge, skills and equipment to enjoy the national forests, others may not have the capability to participate in an activity on their own. By permitting commercial services to operate on the Flagstaff Ranger District, this need can be met.

There are four steps the Forest Service takes to reach a decision regarding the amount and location of commercial services: a needs assessment, a visitor capacity analysis, an outfitter-guide allocation, and finally an environmental analysis that references the first three documents.

An outfitter-guide “Needs Assessment” determines public and agency need for authorized outfitting and guiding activities (Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 2709.11 41.53e, Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2712.1). The need for outfitted and guided services in a particular area considers more than requests by proponents for conducting guided activities on the national forest. Public and agency need takes into consideration the range of recreation opportunities for the area based on recreation supply and demand, current outfitting and guiding activities, agency objectives that outfitter-guides can assist in achieving, and current non-guided opportunities. A Needs Assessment is not an analysis conducted under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); rather, it provides support for agency proposals under the NEPA.

A “Capacity Analysis” determines the estimated number of visitors that can use an area during a defined time period based on resource and setting capability.

Finally, an “Outfitter-guide Allocation” expressed as a percent of total visitor capacity available to outfitter-guides (in service days or range of service days) is prepared using the information from the two steps above.

Following completion of the needs assessment, capacity analysis and outfitter-guide allocation, the forest conducts an environmental analysis (NEPA) to authorize site-specific outfitter-guide use. The Deciding Officer will reference the needs assessment, capacity analysis and outfitter-guide allocation in the environmental analysis and decision.

Background

In 2008, the Forest Service released directives (FSH 2709.11) to more effectively manage the outfitter-guide program. Prior to the 2008 outfitter-guide directives, many national forests issued some temporary permits on an annual basis instead of issuing the permittee a priority permit. Several reasons for this exist. First, institutional outfitters (schools, non-profit education organizations) could not be issued a priority permit before 2008. Second, agency workload and the NEPA process inhibited the issuance of some priority permits. Finally, it was standard practice for national forests to issue a temporary permit to a new outfitter-guide for several years to ensure their operations met agency objectives and forest direction.

Under the 2008 directives, the institutional use category was abandoned and temporary use is defined as: Short-term, non-renewable outfitting and guiding use that is authorized in increments of 50 service days, up to a maximum of 200 service days in a 180-day period. This changes how the forest issues temporary permits since temporary use is now 200 service days or less and non-renewable.

Priority use is defined as: Authorization of use for up to 10 years, based on the holder's past use and performance and applicable programmatic or project decisions to allocate use, except as provided in 36 CFR Part 251, Subpart E, authorizations providing for priority use are subject to renewal (FSH 2709.11, sec. 41.531). To accommodate new outfitter-guide permittees, priority permits may be issued for two years with an option to extend for eight years based on satisfactory performance.

The primary Agency direction for the preparation of a Needs Assessment can be found in Forest Service Handbook 2709.11 41.53e:

Conduct a needs assessment to determine the public or agency need for authorized outfitting and guiding activities. A needs assessment may be conducted as part of public scoping during a NEPA analysis. Consider accessibility, size of the area, difficulty of the terrain, current levels of outfitting and guiding, and demographics of visitors to the area.

When conducting a needs assessment for outfitting and guiding activities in a wilderness area, assess whether these activities are necessary for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the area and the extent to which the activities may be authorized consistent with maintaining the wilderness character of the area.

Review previous needs assessments when reauthorizing use to ensure that they remain relevant to current and projected use trends, and update them if necessary.

Outfitters and guides must also meet Agency objectives. These objectives are specifically outlined in the Forest Service Manuals (FSMs) and Forest Service Handbooks (FSHs). See Appendix A for specific objectives related to outfitter-guides.

The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to identify the public and agency needs for outfitter-guide services that enhance the public's appreciation of the forest with minimal impacts to forest

resources. Once the need for outfitter-guide services is established, the forest will determine how to accommodate current and potential future outfitter-guide permits.

Forest Service Mission

The Forest Service mission is: *To sustain the health, productivity and diversity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.* Outfitter-guides are expected to conduct their activities so that they meet the overall Forest Service mission. As set forth in law, this mission is to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people. Objectives for outfitter-guides (FSH 2709.11, 42.53b) include:

Provide for outfitting and guiding services that address concerns of public health and safety and that foster successful small businesses consistent with the applicable land management plan.

Facilitate greater participation of youth and educational groups in their program.

Be skilled and experienced individuals and conduct their activities in a manner that protects environmental resources and ensures that national forest visitors receive high-quality services.

Framework for Sustainable Recreation

The Agency's [Framework for Sustainable Recreation](#) identifies a vision, core principles and focus areas for contributing to the sustainability of national forests and adjacent communities.

The recreation vision – *Renewing body and spirit, Inspiring passion for the land* – recognizes the spiritual, mental, and physical connections people make with the land. At its core, the Framework recognizes that many people connect to and know their national forests through recreation. To be relevant to future generations, the Forest Service must encourage people to experience the outdoors first hand and outfitter-guides are one of the primary partners to do so.

The outfitter-guide program contributes most significantly to the following focus areas:

Forge Strategic Partnerships – Outfitter-guides are key partners in the delivery of recreation opportunities to a wide variety of forest visitors. Often, a guided trip is the first introduction someone has to a national forest. Outfitter-guides provide “recreational experiences, service activities, and environmental education for youth and adults that promote fitness, appreciation of nature and history, and citizen stewardship.”

Promote Citizen Stewardship – People who understand and appreciate the natural and cultural environment are more likely to support long-term efforts to care for it. Through environmental education and learning opportunities, outfitter-guides provide first-hand experiences and help cultivate citizen stewards.

Develop a Sustainable Financial Foundation – Outfitter-guides contribute to a sustainable financial foundation by delivering services and programs the Forest Service cannot. As commercial entities operating on the national forests, a portion of their revenue is returned to the Forest Service to be reinvested in program administration and land management activities.

Role of Outfitter-guides

Outfitter-guides can play a critical role in helping the Districts achieve the desired conditions for recreation opportunities in the following areas:

Education and Interpretation for Visitors

Many people want to know more about the natural and cultural features of the area they are visiting. While education and interpretation can be accomplished through signs, brochures and other static media, Freeman Tilden, the father of modern interpretation, said that “interpretation is revelation based upon information.” Outfitter-guides have a long reputation of turning information into a story and enhancing the experience of their clients.

Education and interpretation are often central to achieving the desired conditions in wilderness areas. Forest Service wilderness management direction (FSM 2323.83) states, “Verbal interpretative services by qualified wilderness rangers, volunteers, or permitted guides are acceptable.” Therefore, along with wilderness rangers and volunteers, outfitter-guides can deliver the appropriate message both inside and outside wilderness. The Forest can work with potential permittees to develop appropriate education and interpretation messages.

Protection of Sensitive Resources

Outfitter-guides are required to protect resources during their operations, so there is a greater opportunity for resource protection from guided versus unguided visitors. Outfitter-guide clients will have the opportunity to see and learn about unique cultural sites, the interconnected relationships of flora and fauna, and the effects, both positive and negative, of human activity on natural resources. With their captive and interested audience, outfitter-guides can discuss and demonstrate Leave No Trace and other resource protection techniques, and help instill a resource ethic in their clients. There is a strong accountability that critical resources are protected and not affected by the guides’ or their clients’ activities.

Building Positive National Forest Constituencies

Outfitter-guides can assist the Forest in developing public appreciation of the land, its diversity, and the need for protection and management. Through education and interpretation, outfitter-guides can highlight management challenges and advocate support for resource protection efforts. Guided clients may share these messages with their friends and family and become public land constituents themselves.

Fostering Access to Opportunities

The national forest environment can be intimidating to people who are not familiar with the outdoors. Outfitter-guides typically provide the knowledge, skills and/or equipment their clients don’t possess. Outfitter-guides have an opportunity to introduce people to something highly different from their daily lives. They also have specialized knowledge that helps people feel more comfortable in a new setting.

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Forest Service Partners

Outfitter-guides are the eyes and ears of the Forest Service. They can provide valuable feedback to the Forest about impacts to natural and cultural resources, and how much and what kind of use is occurring, including unpermitted activity.

Analysis Area

The analysis area (Figure 1) includes all National Forest System (NFS) lands and waters managed by the Coconino NF on the Flagstaff Ranger District (FRD). The analysis area does not include State, Tribal, other federal, county or private lands within or adjacent to the Forest. The analysis includes five wilderness areas (Kachina Peaks, Strawberry Crater, and portions of Kendrick Mountain, Sycamore Canyon, and Red Rock – Secret Mountain)) that have shared administrative responsibility with other National Forests or Ranger Districts; however, this analysis only applies to lands administered by the FRD.

Due to proximity to Flagstaff and surround communities, the FRD experiences a high level of daily urban interface use. The district also experiences a considerable amount of visitation from people seeking to escape summer heat from Phoenix and sightseers who are traveling to the Grand Canyon.

The FRD encompasses nearly 850,000 acres of National Forest lands around the Flagstaff area, from Mormon Lake and Anderson Mesa to north of the San Francisco Peaks.

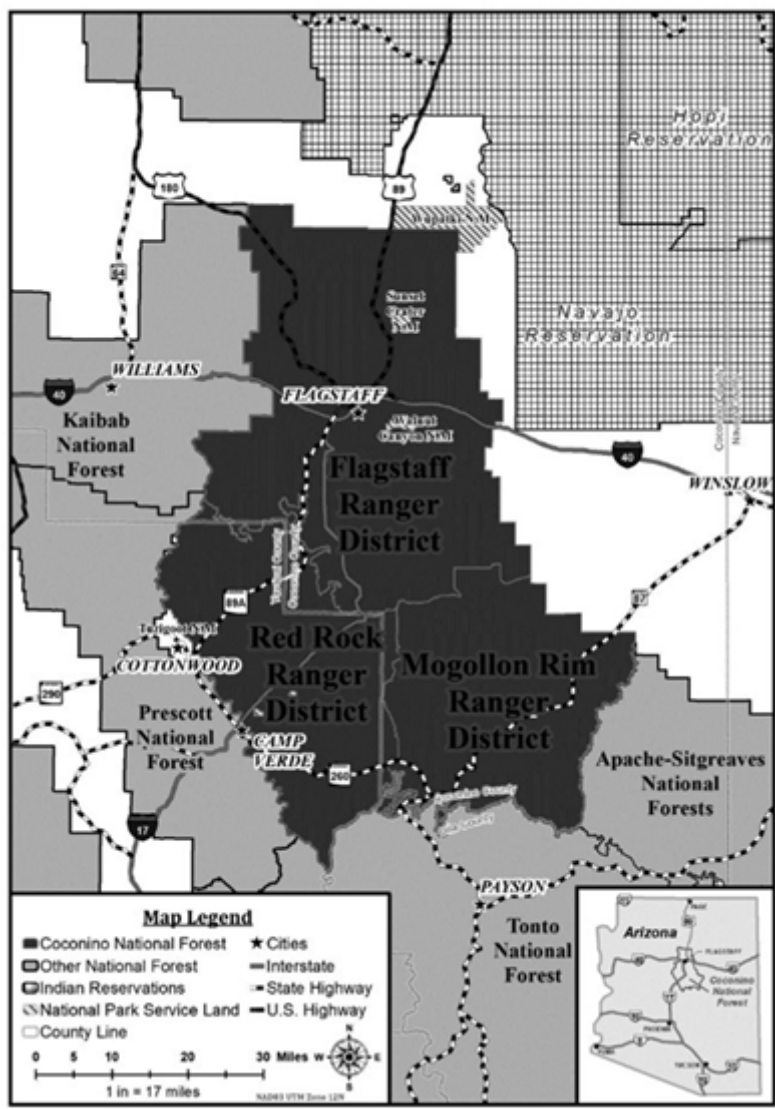
At 12,643 feet, Humphreys Peak is the highest elevation in Arizona. Three of the summits that ring this dormant volcano's now quiet inner caldera are higher than any other mountain in the state. Hiking, mountain biking, sightseeing, wildlife watching, OHV use, and winter sports (skiing, sledding, passive snow play activities) are the predominant recreation activities.

Arizona's largest natural lake, Mormon Lake, is located on the district. In addition, there are several other lakes on the district including Ashurst Lake and Upper Lake Mary that provide boating, fishing, kayaking, camping, picnicking, and other water based activities.

The area is also known for its plentiful wildlife providing wildlife viewing and birding opportunities in a variety of ecological settings from the alpine tundra to the upper Sonoran life zones. Additionally, hunting is a popular recreational activity on the FRD especially in the fall season.

There are ten campgrounds, two group site campgrounds, 11 day-use areas, two cabin rental sites, 87 recreation resident permits, a Cinder Hills OHV area (13,711 acres), two environmental study areas, a geological area, a lava river cave, and over 325 miles of trail on the district. Also, there are hundreds of miles of road identified for dispersed camping

Figure 1. Vicinity Map.



Wilderness

There are two wilderness areas on the District that are considered in this analysis. Though the District has two other wilderness areas within its boundary, either the majority of the wilderness area is located on another forest or district, or the area is primarily managed by another district or forest.

Sycamore Canyon-This wilderness consists of 55,937 acres, also administered by the Kaibab and Prescott National Forests. The wilderness encompasses all of Sycamore Canyon from its forested rim near Williams, Arizona to its desert canyon mouth in the Verde Valley. Most of the visitor access to the wilderness is through the Coconino National Forest. Climbing, hiking and backpacking are the primary recreation activities.

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Red Rock Secret Mountain-Designated in 1984, this wilderness has 43,950 acres. Bordered by Sycamore Canyon Wilderness on the west, two high mesas, Secret Mountain and Wilson Mountain, and deep canyons provide habitat for wildlife and solitude for visitors due to the area's rugged nature. Day hiking and backpacking are the most common visitor activities.

Kachina Peaks Wilderness- at 18,960 acres, this wilderness is dominated by Humphreys Peak, a dormant volcano. Several trails lead to the top of the peak, the inner caldera, or on the flanks of the mountain. The only alpine tundra in Arizona is located here. Backcountry skiing and day use hiking are popular activities. Much of the use is concentrated on the Kachina and Humphrys trails, with opportunities for solitude available elsewhere.

The FRD is managed according to the Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) USFS 1987, with updates. The LRMP establishes forest wide goals and objectives; standards and guidelines applying to future activities; management direction; and monitoring and evaluation requirements for the multiple uses of the forest, including recreation.

Needs Assessment Factors

Forest Niche

The CNF developed a recreation niche statement and setting map through the Recreation Facility Analysis process (2008). The niche statement describes the unique characteristics, opportunities, settings, and activities of the forest's recreation program. Outfitter-guide services should be aligned with niche opportunities and settings. The statement reads as follows:

The Colorful Coconino: Red Rocks, Green Forests, White Peaks and Dark Skies

The Coconino NF is a special place because of its elevation differences ranging from 2,600 to 12,633 feet supporting diverse animal life, plant life, climate, seasonal opportunities, and geology. Prehistoric and historic cultures had strong connections to this landscape which today inspires visitors and has a restorative effect.

These links are exemplified by rock art, heritage sites and the abundance of guided tours to special places. Dispersed day-use activities across the majority of the Forest's landscape characterize the visitor's experience on the Forest. The visitor may choose to view the contrasting scenery from high desert to alpine settings, hike any of the 700 miles of trail, or use OHV's on designated motorized trails and play areas all in one day; or take several days to explore the depth of these possibilities. Night sky viewing and four observatories are supported by an internationally designated "Dark Sky" area.

Settings, Special Places, and Values

At the heart of the Forest, The Red Rocks of Sedona is listed as the most beautiful attraction in America by USA Today. The dramatic change from desert to plateau is accentuated by the spectacular Mogollon Rim, a 2,000 foot vertical escarpment across central Arizona. Steep-sided water-carved canyons penetrate the Mogollon Rim creating a pathway onto the tree covered plateau. Punctuated with volcanic cones and peaks the plateau is a part of the largest continuous pine belt in Region 3. The variety of landforms creates a changing viewscape seen from communities, trails and roads. The quality of life for local communities is enhanced by the scenery, clean water, and clean air.

High Use - This setting includes Oak Creek Canyon, the highest peak in Arizona, multiple lakes and East Clear Creek which are examples of the high density that visitors can expect. Visitors to the Forest commonly experience a seamless shift from community trails and roads onto the Forest, without recognizing the change.

Scenic Corridor – Visitors drive through the changing landscapes and view the spectacular scenery, by stopping at observation points they gain an understanding and appreciation for environmental ethics.

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Moderate Use/Dispersed – This less structured setting includes a lot of the vast open space of the Forest. From sparse vegetation to dense timber, canyons to plateaus and mountains this area typifies the Forest contrasting landscapes.

Low Use – Remote areas offer solitude and unconfined recreation. The area's primeval character dominates and no permanent improvements exist. The Forest has 10 Wilderness areas, not all of which are in this setting.

Activities/Opportunities/Experiences

At the top of the list, viewing scenery and hiking the trails of the Coconino keep the visitors coming back. Viewing wildlife, visiting historical and pre-historic sites, outfitter guided experiences, OHV riding, and relief from heat and cold are next in popularity. There are also nearly Forest-wide opportunities for environmental education and interpretation programs, successful big-game viewing/hunting and mountain biking.

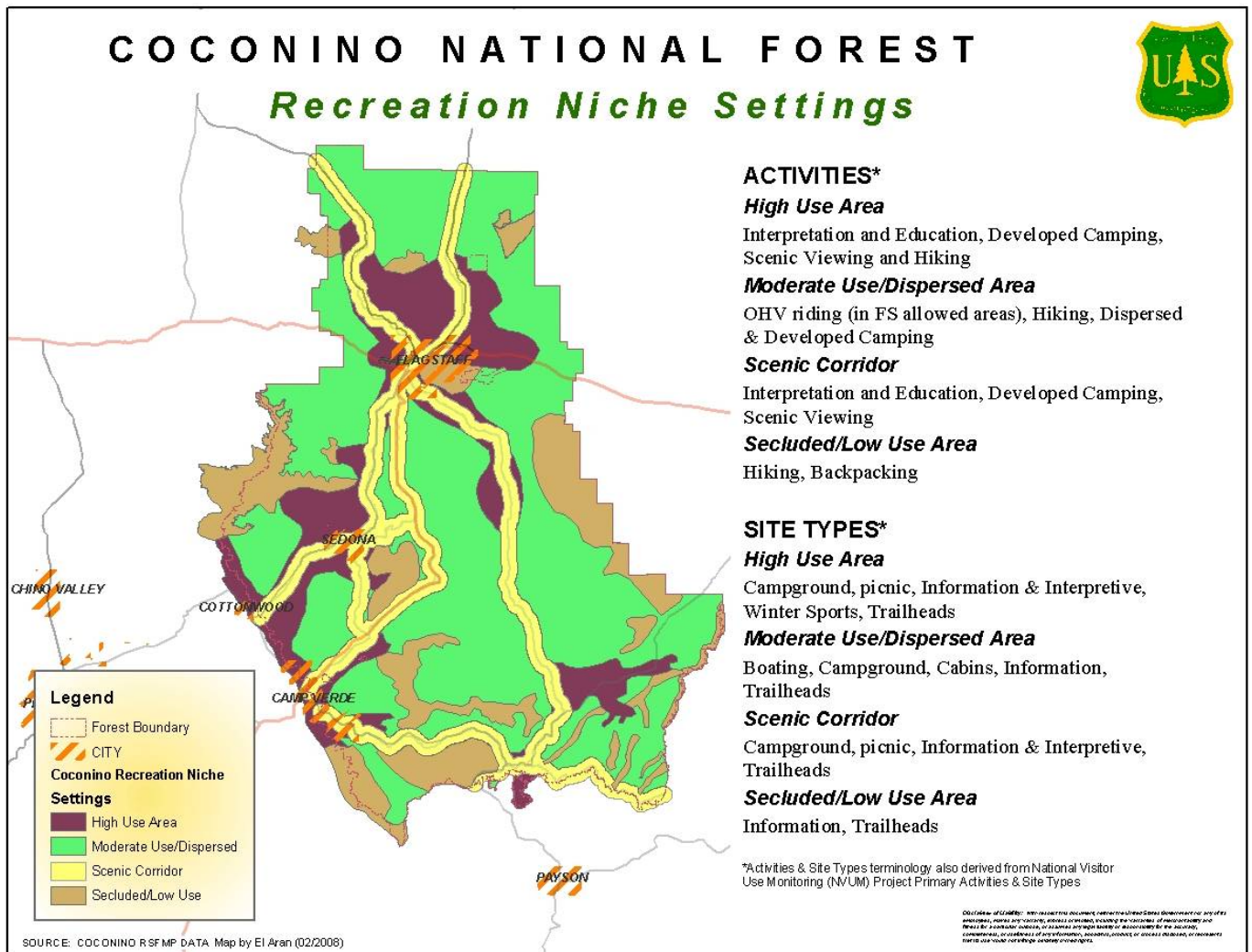
High Use – Developed camping, snow sports, snow play, and water play

Scenic Corridor – Interpretation and Education, observation sites

Moderate Use/Dispersed - Well managed dispersed camping, horseback riding

Low Use – Backpacking, horseback riding

Figure 2. Coconino Forest Niche Map.



Demand

The future of nature-based recreation participation is often cyclic, depending on economic, environmental and social factors. Some conclusions can be drawn from trends data. Recent events including the 2008 recession and subsequent rising unemployment rates could change the way Americans participate in recreational activities in the future. A demand analysis was prepared for this project, analyzing national, regional and local use. The full demand analysis can be found in Appendix C. Key points include:

- Nearly 50% of Americans ages six and older participated in outdoor recreation in 2009. That's a slight increase from 2008 and equates to a total of 137.8 million Americans.
- 42% of outdoor participants said the economy impacted how often they participated in outdoor activities in 2009.
- Significant changes occurred in 2008 including the recession, children and young adults' growing disinterest in outdoor recreation, and gas price increases. Also, the

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total number of outdoor outings declined slightly in 2009 and 2010, but rebounded in 2011. Participation rates are also highest in the Mountain region which includes Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada and other western states.

Regionally, a survey of Arizona “Involved Users” in three different recreation category types showed the largest percentage of participation in activities including visiting a wilderness or natural area, swimming, and day hiking.

Forest Recreation Use

In response to the need for accurate recreation use data, the Forest Service developed a permanent sampling system known as the National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) project which has been implemented nationwide. All national forests and grasslands completed two rounds of data collection as of 2009 and some, including the Coconino, have completed the and fourth rounds. The NVUM provides statistical recreation use information at the forest, regional, and national level. The following table, from data collected in 2010, shows general forest visitation by destination (2015 data was not yet available for this analysis). While this is general forest information, it gives a snapshot of what types of forest land the majority of visitors are using.

Table 1: Visit Type.

Visit Type	Visits (1,000s)	90% Confidence Level (%)
Total Estimated Site Visits	4,715	±14.2
Day Use Developed Site Visits	2,244	±17.7
Overnight Use Developed Site Visits	128	±23.0
General Forest Area Visits	1,842	±28.8
Designated Wilderness Visits†	501	±18.0
Total Estimated National Forest Visits	28,868	±15.4
Special Events and Organized Camp Use‡	14	±0.0

*A Site Visit is the entry of one person onto a National Forest site or area to participate in recreation activities for an unspecified period of time.

† Designated Wilderness visits are included in the Site Visits estimate.

‡ Special events and organizational camp use are not included in the Site Visit estimate, only in the National Forest Visits estimate. Forests reported the total number of participants and observers so this number is not estimated; it is treated as 100% accurate.

§ A National Forest Visit is defined as the entry of one person upon a national forest to participate in recreation activities for an unspecified period of time. A National Forest Visit can be composed of multiple Site Visits.

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This value defines the upper and lower bounds of the visitation estimate at the 90% confidence level, for example if the visitation estimate is 100 +/-5%, one would say “at the 90% confidence level visitation is between 95 and 105 visits.”

Demographic results show that 45 percent of visits are made by females. Hispanic people (8%) are the most common racial or ethnic minority. There are relatively few older people in the visiting population. Only about 4 percent of visits are made by people aged 70 and up. About 20% of the visiting population is in their forties and nearly 15 percent are in their thirties.

Children under the age of 16 make up a bit more than 17 percent of visits. A slightly smaller proportion of visits come from within 50 miles of the forest (24.5%) as come from over 500 miles away (about 30%).

The average visit to the forest lasts five hours.

Table 2: Activity Participation.

Activity	% Participation*	% Main Activity‡	Avg Hours Doing Main Activity
Viewing Natural Features	73.1	23.7	2.4
Hiking/Walking	70.8	32	3
Relaxing	62.3	7.1	6.5
Viewing Wildlife	48.7	2.4	2.1
Driving for Pleasure	46.1	3.5	2.9
Visiting Historic Sites	29.2	3.2	1.8
Nature Center Activities	26.4	0.4	1.6
Picnicking	21.4	1.3	6.9
Nature Study	17.0	0.4	2.4
Other Non-Motorized	13.0	4.7	2.8
OHV Use	9.0	0.7	3.8
Bicycling	6.2	3.0	2.3
Developed Camping	5.5	1.8	20.5
Downhill Skiing	5.0	4.5	4.0
Fishing	4.8	1.9	5.3
Some Other Activity	4.3	3.6	2.0
Primitive Camping	4.2	0.8	16.3
Motorized Trail Activity	3.8	0.5	3.2
Gathering Forest Products	3.3	0.5	4.4
Resort Use	2.7	0.2	7.7
Hunting	2.1	1.7	31.9
Non-Motorized Water	1.8	1.2	6.3
Backpacking	1.2	0.4	30.7
Cross Country Skiing	1.2	0.9	3.1

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Activity	% Participation*	% Main Activity‡	Avg Hours Doing Main Activity
Horseback Riding	1.2	0.1	1.5
Motorized Water	1.0	0.3	3.3

Visitors were also asked about percentage of their visit spent at a list of special facilities. The scenic byway topped the list at 40.8%. However, 39.9% percent of respondents said they used none of the listed special facilities.

In general, visitors are feeling moderately crowded. When asked to rank several areas in terms of perceived crowding, with a score of ten representing overcrowded and a 1 meaning “hardly anyone there,” average ratings were less than close to five, with the least crowded feeling in undeveloped general forest areas at 4.2. Designated wilderness ranked a 4.7.

In designated wilderness, visitors were divided fairly equally between male (52.3%) and female (47.7%). The vast majority of wilderness visitors identified as white. The largest age group fell between 50-59 (24.4%) with the next closest the 60-69 age group (16.6%). The lowest representation in wilderness visitors was the 16-19 age group at 2.1%.

Outfitter and Guide Use

Actual use is the amount of client days (commonly called service days) an existing outfitter-guide is authorized to use under a special use permit in a given year. Often the amount authorized does not equal the amount of actual use for various reasons including lack of demand, a poor economy, or natural disasters. While actual use numbers are not the sole basis for determining need, they can show public demand for outfitting and guiding.

An indication of need can be determined from a review of the service days allocated to outfitter-guides versus the service days they actually used. A review can give a clear picture of what types of activities are more popular and how the use varies per year. It should be noted that the recession and impacts to the economy can be seen across the country in lower outfitter-guide utilization of service days beginning in 2007.

Complete tables showing each activity by year and percent of service days used can be found in Appendix E. Occasionally the amounts of days authorized/days used exceed 100%. This can happen when an outfitter-guide is granted additional days during the season, or when they exceed their authorized days without permission.

Generally, the percentage of service days authorized versus service days used has been low to moderate for the District among most permitted activities. Service days used may change as current health issues (with one permittee), business marketing and economy changes. The exception is Wilderness Leave No Trace activities, which averaged a 92% utilization rate over the last five years.

Recreation Events and Non-Commercial Group Use

The District permits a large number of recreation events (about 100 permits annually). Some of these fall within the outfitter-guide realm and others in the non-commercial group (over 75 people) category. Often these groups can be in excess of 500 total participants. The data shows a rising number of these events and a demand for more. Managerial capacity and the sustainability of the land to absorb these events is a concern.

Outfitter and Guide Requests

Over the past several years FRD has received numerous requests for guided activities including rock climbing, mountain biking, bird watching, and hiking. The majority falls within the recreation event category and includes running, bicycling, archery and gun-related contests, and other competitive events. Occasional requests are received for horseback riding, hiking, and other types of tours. A large percentage of administrative time is taken up by fielding non-commercial group requests such as weddings, cart-pulling events and reenactments.

Evaluation Criteria

Non-wilderness categories

The outfitter-guide analysis team, composed of recreation and wilderness specialists from the Districts, developed evaluation categories and associated criteria to assess public and agency need for outfitter-guide services. Appendix D contains the ranking of each activity across the categories.

Criteria 1: At risk youth, non-traditional visitors, disabled visitors and minors

This criterion addresses the opportunities that are available for under-represented populations to experience the national forests. Some activities are difficult to participate in without a guide due to lack of transportation, lack of adult mentors, and readily accessible information. Some outfitters target these populations and can be a valuable partner in introducing new types of visitors to the forests.

Criteria 2: Education, Interpretation, Stewardship

The Forest Service provides many public education and outreach programs. However, through direct contact with wildland settings, outfitter-guides can help people connect with nature and begin to develop their own sense of the human role and responsibility for protecting and conserving natural and cultural resources. Some activities lend themselves more readily to conservation efforts than others.

Criteria 3: Specialized knowledge, skills and abilities

This criterion recognizes the role outfitter-guides serve in fostering access to opportunities and providing services for people who lack specific skills, knowledge, equipment or abilities related to a specific outdoor activity or pursuit.

The national forest environment can be intimidating to people who are not familiar with the outdoors. Outfitter-guides typically provide the knowledge, skills and/or equipment their clients don't possess. Outfitter-guides have an opportunity to introduce people to National Forest recreation opportunities they may otherwise not be able to experience. They also have specialized knowledge and skill that helps people feel more comfortable and safe.

Criteria 4: Regional Availability

This criterion recognizes the opportunities that are unique to FRD. It also addresses the forest niche statement, which describes the unique characteristics, opportunities, settings, and activities of the forest's recreation program. This criterion assesses the degree in which activities are aligned with niche opportunities and settings.

Criteria 5: Mitigation of Resource Impacts

This criterion acknowledges that some activities can have an impact upon natural resources and assesses the degree to which outfitter-guides, through modeling ethical behavior and imparting skills, can mitigate these impacts. The skills that clients learn can be invaluable when they return to forest settings on their own.

Criteria 6: Benefit to Local Economy

This criterion recognizes that recreation is the portal through which people connect with national forests, and the importance of working with communities to provide for a sustainable future. Outfitter-guides can provide services that bring jobs and tourism to small rural communities.

Criteria 7: Safety/Risk

This criterion evaluates the level of risk an activity poses and the ability of a guide to prevent serious injury or death by providing oversight and instruction.

Criteria 8: Equipment

In some cases, the equipment needed to perform an activity is so cost-prohibitive that a potential participant may be discouraged and decide not to visit the national forest. This criterion evaluates the cost of equipment and the need for a guide to provide it.

Criteria 9: Demand

This criterion assesses local trends and regional demand for both existing and potential new recreation activities that typically occur or could occur on the forest.

Table 3: Non-Wilderness Evaluative Criteria.

At Risk Youth, Minors, Non-traditional and Disabled Visitors	
Ranking	Description
L	This activity offers extensive opportunities for youth or non-traditional visitors to participate; the need is low for outfitter-guides to provide services.
M	This activity offers moderate opportunities for youth and non-traditional visitors to participate; the need is moderate for outfitter-guides to provide services.
H	This activity does not offer opportunities for youth or non-traditional visitors to participate; the need is high for outfitter-guides to provide services.
Education/Interpretation/Stewardship	
Ranking	Description
L	The activity does not require the participant to learn new or unique skills or little time is required to master needed skills.
M	The activity requires the participant learn new or unique skills but the skills can be fairly easily taught.
H	The activity requires the participant to master unique, technical skills and considerable time and/or talent is needed to master the skills. Use of a guide is almost a prerequisite for a novice to participate in the activity.
Specialized Knowledge and Skills	

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Ranking	Description
L	The activity does not require the participant to learn new or unique skills or little time is required to master needed skills.
M	The activity requires the participant learn new or unique skills but the skills can be fairly easily taught.
H	The activity requires the participant to master unique, technical skills and considerable time and/or talent is needed to master the skills. Use of a guide is almost a prerequisite for a novice to participate in the activity.

Regional Availability

Ranking	Description
L	Similar services are widely available within a reasonable distance (less than 2 hours' drive).
M	Similar services are somewhat available within the geographic area although dispersed in nature; visitors would need to drive more than two hours to participate.
H	Few similar service are offered, this opportunity is unique across the geographic area.

Resource Impacts

Ranking	Description
L	The general public can participate in this activity without causing lasting resource damage (past one season) due to type of activity, season of use and easily understood regulations; common sense dictates actions.
M	There is a moderate potential for resource damage lasting past one season; the presence of an outfitter is beneficial and can mitigate this potential.
H	An outfitter is highly beneficial and sometimes essential in order for visitors to participate in this activity without causing resource damage.

Benefit to Local Economy

Ranking	Description
L	Outfitter-guide opportunities for the activity would minimally benefit the local economy.
M	Outfitter-guide opportunities for the activity would somewhat support economic sustainability in local communities (e.g., utilize or foster small business, create seasonal jobs).
H	Outfitter-guide opportunities for the activity would actively promote economic sustainability in local communities (e.g., utilize or foster small business, create jobs, draw visitors specifically to participate in the activity or encouraging visitors to spend the night in nearby communities).

Safety/Risk

Ranking	Description
L	There is low potential for serious injury or loss of life when participating in this activity.
M	There is moderate potential for serious injury or loss of life when participating in this activity. Outfitter-guides can mitigate safety risks with proper equipment and instruction.
H	There is high potential for serious injury or loss of life when participating in this activity. Outfitter-guides must have extensive training and/or certification to lead this activity.

Equipment

Ranking	Description
L	No specialized equipment is necessary or it is available at enough price levels and choices that it is affordable for most (Binoculars, coolers, backpacks, and boots).
M	Specialized equipment needed for the activity is reasonably affordable, though one or two items may be expensive for some. Most people would not purchase the equipment without some confidence of repeated or continuous use (bicycles, tents, climbing equipment).
H	Specialized equipment needed for the activity is expensive to the point of being beyond the reach of the many people who might otherwise try the activity or would probably not be used on a regular basis without continued instruction (snowmobiles, horses, whitewater rafts)

Demand

Ranking	Description
L	Little to no documented interest this activity locally including little/no letters/requests of public inquiry about this activity, or little/no requests from current/potential outfitters about expanding their use.
M	Moderate documented interest in this activity locally including occasional letters/requests of public inquiry about this activity, or occasional requests from current/potential outfitters about expanding their use.
H	Significant increased or predicted higher public interest locally, several/many letters of public inquiry about this activities, or several/many requests from current/potential outfitters about expanding their use.

Wilderness Criteria

The need for commercial services in wilderness must be considered carefully. The Wilderness Act of 1964, Section 4(d)(6) states: “*Commercial services may be performed within the wilderness areas designated by this Act to the **extent necessary** for activities which are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas.*”

The Wilderness Act directly states that commercial services may be allowed in wilderness and provides the general criteria for determining appropriate types and amounts of operations to be considered for recreation and other purposes of wilderness. The overriding constraint on commercial services (and all types of visitor use) in wilderness, is the mandate to preserve wilderness character. Human influences that impair wilderness character are to be minimized so that natural conditions are protected, and the benefits of the wilderness resource (social, biological, and physical) are available to future generations. Decisions about commercial services in wilderness must consider potential benefits and effects to wilderness character as defined by the four statutory qualities of wilderness character: undeveloped, natural, untrammeled, and outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Visitor use of wilderness (including commercial services) is compatible with all the other mandates of the Wilderness Act to the point where visitor use does not degrade natural conditions or impair the wilderness character of the area. The evaluation criteria for commercial services in wilderness on the Districts are therefore based on the mandates provided in the Wilderness Act, especially in regard to the preservation and protection of wilderness character and the extent necessary for activities which are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas.

Additional wilderness criteria were developed to analyze the need for commercial services in wilderness, and three criteria (safety/risk, benefit to local economy and equipment) were not included. The reasons for these exclusions include the idea that wilderness is meant to be a place where challenge and risk do occur; wilderness itself does not exist to benefit an economy in a tangible manner, and since all the activities analyzed for wilderness occur in other locations on the Forests, the cost of equipment should not be a deciding factor for wilderness.

Additional Criteria 1: Opportunities for Solitude

Of all of the aspects of wilderness character, solitude is the one that can be most affected by additional outfitter-guide permits. Solitude, in the context of wilderness, does not mean complete isolation, nor is solitude at the other end of a continuum from crowded. Rather, it has been construed to mean separation from others and the influences of others. The conditions necessary for solitude often refer to some degree of separation in sight, sound, and distance between visitor groups who are within the wilderness. The degree of separation from other groups as well as size of the area, existing trails, and number of access points and destinations (e.g., lakes, vistas, and landscape features) may all affect the opportunity for solitude.

Criteria 2: Wilderness Dependency

Currently, Forest Service Wilderness Management Regulations and Policy do not define what is meant by “*the extent necessary*” and do not prescribe a method for determining the amount of commercial services needed. In FSH 2323.12 policy states that consistent with management as wilderness, O/G operations may be permitted where they are necessary to help segments of the public use and enjoy wilderness areas for recreational or other wilderness purposes. The above excerpt from Forest Service policy implements the Wilderness Act, subsequent legislation, and regulations by interpreting the legal direction. For outfitter and guide operations, several points can be made including the following key guideline:

Recreation activities, including those provided by outfitters and guides, are appropriate in wilderness only if they are wilderness dependent. By inference, non-wilderness dependent activities may be provided for or may be experienced elsewhere on the national forest¹.

The FS policy refers to “wilderness experience” and “wilderness setting” (2323.11, 2323.12 #3) to define what wilderness dependent means. In practice, wilderness managers typically interpret “wilderness dependent” to mean activities dependent on the wilderness resource (as defined in the 1964 Act, Sections 2 (a) and (c)). Ultimately, recreation should not be defined as wilderness dependent if it can occur in any setting that has certain attributes (glaciated peaks, unroaded areas for endurance run routes, etc.), which are not part of the wilderness resource as defined by the 1964 Act. The term “wilderness dependent” is tied to the wilderness resource, not to any specific recreational activity or recreational setting simply because they can occur within wilderness. In accord with these guidelines, this evaluation criterion is based on the degree to which this activity is wilderness dependent and could be pursued in other locations outside of wilderness.

Table 4: Additional Wilderness Evaluative Criteria.

Setting Dependency	
Ranking	Description
L	This activity can be pursued in other locations outside of wilderness and is not wilderness dependent.
M	It may not be specifically wilderness dependent, but opportunities outside of wilderness are limited and the presence of wilderness contributes to the experience of visitors.
H	There are no other locations outside of wilderness that can accommodate this type of use, either due to geography or experience, or this activity is wilderness dependent (for example, trips focused entirely on wilderness education).

Opportunities for Solitude

¹ Guidelines taken from “Determining the Need and Extent Necessary and Allocating Use for Commercial Services in Wilderness”

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Ranking	Description
L	This activity, due to its location, type, size of group, season of use or other factor would likely affect opportunities for solitude.
M	This activity, due to its location, type, size of group, season of use or other factor has a moderate potential to affect opportunities for solitude.
H	This activity, due to its location, type, size of group, season of use or other factor would likely not affect opportunities for solitude.

Public and Agency Need for Outfitter-guides

Using the information from the supply and demand analysis, actual use analysis, and the evaluative criteria, an overall need determination was made for wilderness and non-wilderness activities across the forest. While the activities evaluated represent a comprehensive list of activities that commonly occur on the District, it would be impossible to identify every activity that could occur on the forest or that an outfitter-guide may want to offer services for. If the District wants to consider any additional activities for outfitter-guide use, the activity can be run through the same evaluation process.

Need for Outfitter-guides

The outfitter-guide project team categorized activities into one of four possible lists. Two important caveats exist: (1) If an activity is identified as meeting public need for new or additional use, it does not mean that it can be accommodated everywhere, and (2) The lists of activities occurring or expected to be requested on the District is not all inclusive. Many other new activities could emerge in the future.

List 1. Activities for which there is a higher need for outfitter-guide use. Outfitter-guides can greatly enhance visitor experience and safety, reduce environmental impacts, and/or contribute to local economies.

- Backcountry skiing/snowboarding
- Horseback riding (day)
- Rock climbing
- Shuttle Service to Arizona Snowbowl

List 2. Activities for which there is a moderate need for outfitter-guide services. Outfitter-guides have a moderate potential to enhance visitor experience and safety, reduce environmental impacts, and/or contribute to local economies. Items on this list represent situations where the need was ranked as moderate due to the combined evaluation ranking, demand, and/or trend information showing a moderate benefit from this type of service.

- Avalanche Awareness Classes
- Backpacking
- Big game hunting (no horses)
- Big game hunting (horseback)
- Hiking
- Bouldering
- Canoeing/kayaking/SUP
- Cross country ski/snowshoe
- Dog sledding
- Mountain biking
- Nature-based education

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- Horseback riding (overnight)
- Jeep/OHV
- Road biking
- Snowmobiling

List 3: Activities for which there is a lower need for outfitter-guide services. There may be plenty to serve the public and/or the use is maxed out for the limited terrain where it is possible (additional use may be considered on a compartment-by-compartment basis). Here managers must weigh the potential benefits and impacts carefully when considering authorizing additional use.

- Birdwatching
- Drop camps
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Photography

List 4: Activities for which there is no need for outfitter-guide services. These activities will not be considered for further analysis because they do not meet one or more of the indicators for need or opportunities are extremely limited.

- Rafting

Wilderness

List 1. Activities for which there is a higher need for outfitter-guide use. Outfitter-guides can greatly enhance visitor experience and safety, reduce environmental impacts, and educate visitors about wilderness. Items on this list would represent situations where the need was ranked as high due to the combined evaluation ranking, demand, and/or trend information clearly showing a high benefit from this type of service.

None identified

List 2. Activities for which there is a moderate need for outfitter-guide services. Outfitter-guides have a moderate potential to enhance visitor experience and safety, reduce environmental impacts, and/or contribute to local economies.

- Avalanche Awareness Classes
- Backcountry skiing/snowboarding
- Backpacking
- Birdwatching
- Bouldering
- Cross-country skiing/snowshoeing
- Nature-based education
- Horseback riding (day and overnight)
- Photography
- Rock Climbing

List 3. Activities for which there is a lower need for outfitter-guide services. There may be plenty to serve the public, the use is not particularly wilderness dependent, and/or the use is maxed out for the limited terrain where it is possible (additional use may be considered on a wilderness by wilderness basis). Here managers must weigh the potential benefits and impacts carefully when considering authorizing additional use.

- Big game hunting
- Fishing
- Day hiking
- Drop camps

List 4: Activities for which there is no need for outfitter-guide services. These activities will not be considered for further analysis because they do not meet one or more of the indicators for need or opportunities are extremely limited.

- canoeing/kayaking

Recreation Events

It is clear that this activity has a much higher demand than for guided services, both for non-commercial group use and for special fee-based events. Due to the wide range of existing activities, recreation events as a whole were not evaluated as a category above. The issue with these events is often related more to capacity than to need. The recommended method of evaluating types of events is displayed in the table below and focuses on fee-based events, as NC events are typically permitted.

Category	Value	Criteria
Recreation Niche	L (1 point)	There is no specific niche market for this activity nor does the niche emphasize the settings, and/or special places where the activity may occur.
	M (2 points)	There is no specific niche market for this activity however the niche emphasizes the settings, and/or special places where the activity may occur.
	H (3 points)	There is a specific niche market for this activity. Settings and/or special places where the activity may occur have also been emphasized.
Local Interest	L (1 point)	The activity is not offered currently, nor is there any interest from proponents or the general public in making the activity an offering.
	M (2 points)	The activity occurs currently and/or there is some interest from proponents or the general public in increasing capacity for these types of events. Actual use versus use authorized is on average 50-75%.
	H (3 points)	The activity occurs currently and there is strong interest from proponents and the general public to increase opportunities for these types of events. Actual use versus use authorized on average is 75% or higher.
Social / Facility / Resource Capacity	L (1 point)	This activity would impact and/or diminish the capacity of the resource. Additional such events would increase both the number of encounters with groups and individuals beyond their desired level, increasing impressions of crowding. Use of facilities (trails, trailheads, associated day-use areas, parking lots, etc.) would be greatly increased, making them harder to maintain. Crowding on in the facilities would increase damage to the vegetative and visual resources adjacent to the facilities and reduce visitor satisfaction.

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	<p>M (2 points)</p>	<p>This activity would moderately impact the capacity of the resource. There is moderate opportunity to increase the number of events beyond the current level without increasing impressions of crowding. There is moderate additional capacity for visitors to use facilities (trails, trailheads, associated day-use areas, parking lots, etc.) without making them harder to maintain. The facilities can accommodate a moderate amount of added use without visitors negatively impacting the adjacent vegetative and visual resources.</p>
	<p>H (3 points)</p>	<p>This activity would not impact the capacity of the resource. The number of events of this type can be increased well beyond the current level without increasing impressions of crowding. The facilities (trails, trailheads, associated day-use areas, parking lots, etc.) can accommodated greater use without making them harder to maintain. Additional use of facilities by visitors will not negatively impact the adjacent vegetative and visual resources.</p>
<p>Economic Viability</p>	<p>L (1 point)</p>	<p>This activity would minimally benefit the local economy (mostly local participation).</p>
	<p>M (2 points)</p>	<p>This activity would somewhat support economic sustainability in local communities (e.g., utilize or foster small business, moderate participation from out of town visitors who would stay the night)</p>
	<p>H (3 points)</p>	<p>This activity would actively promote economic sustainability in local communities (e.g., utilize or foster small business, create jobs, draw visitors specifically to participate in the activity or encouraging high numbers of visitors (100 +) to spend the night in nearby communities).</p>

In general, a rating of 9 or above would entail a higher need rating.

Conclusions

The areas where there is a higher level of visitor use, proximity to population centers, and variety of available activities had more activities that showed a higher need, but in all cases very few activities reached this ranking. In the other areas, more activities were listed as moderate or low. This reflects, in some cases, lower service day utilization and/or trends in visitor use as well as the ability of the public to access and use the forest on their own. Trends and public input should be balanced by the need to meet resource objectives and to provide services. It is often difficult to determine recreation trends and demand due to a fluctuating economy, emerging technology, and changing populations. In wilderness, very few activities were dependent on a wilderness setting and could be accommodated in other areas. Here again, a balance must be struck between the cultivation of future wilderness supporters and the extent necessary for realizing the public purposes of wilderness as identified in the Wilderness Act.

While a need may be identified for several activities, there may not be sufficient capacity to accommodate all of them. Outfitter-guide capacity is the amount and type of outfitter-guide use that can be accommodated consistent with the desired conditions. This can be described as social and environmental capacity. There may be areas where social or environmental limiting factors mean that additional use cannot be supported. In addition, the managerial capacity to manage permits to standard must be studied. The next step in determining the appropriate level of outfitted use is to balance the capacity with the identified need.

Relationship to Niche and Supply

The forest niche speaks to the following: **the abundance of guided tours to special places.** Important elements of the niche include access to a variety of experiences. Diversity and range of activities is important as well. The evaluative criteria addressed niche alignment in the categories of education and knowledge, skills and abilities. The activities showing a higher need are those which most closely align with the niche.

There are many other federal, state and private providers of recreation opportunities regionally (Appendix C). When assessing capacity to meet demonstrated need, managers should determine whether adequate supply exists elsewhere. This could allow for better prioritization of commercial services. Since a high percentage of the activities analyzed in this document show a moderate need, a plan of action could be to focus on those with a higher need and/or those which can only be accommodated in these particular districts; the activities showing a lower need that are being offered by other providers could be left for those other providers.

Relationship to Trends

Review of forest and state-wide preferences in outdoor recreation activities (Appendix C) shows that nature viewing, day hiking, and relaxing are important to visitors. However, the surveys available are lacking in that they do not reveal if visitors prefer a guide for these types of activities or if they are confident in participating on their own. Likewise, they do not specify if visitors' experiences are enhanced or diminished by the presence of guided groups. Until this

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information is available, trends should be considered for the purposes of general management only. However, when authorizing additional guides for the most popular activities mentioned in the NVUM and SCORP, managers should consider existing use and capacity of the areas to absorb additional pressure.

In the most recent NVUM, visitors said they felt moderately crowded. While this is a Forestwide survey, and results include the often-crowded Sedona area, managers should consider this finding when permitting additional outfitter-guides or recreation events on the Districts. Timing, location and frequency of potential encounters, as well as impacts on facilities such as restrooms, should be evaluated.

Permitting Low to Moderate Need Activities

Agency and public need are dynamic. If an activity ranked lower in terms of need in this evaluation, this does not mean it can never be permitted. This also applies to the higher need activities: if reasons exist, including potential conflicts, high levels of local use or controversy, or managerial capacity to administer permits to standard, managers should consider carefully the implications of adding or expanding guided services. This analysis is meant to serve as guidance only, and there may be situations that warrant deviation from it. Documentation of decisions made is recommended, and revisiting of this analysis should occur on a regular basis to reflect changing needs.

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Appendix A. Agency Management Direction

The Code of Federal Regulations (261.10(c)) prohibits “selling or offering for sale any merchandise or conducting any kind of work activity or service unless authorized by Federal law, regulation, or special-use authorization” on federal lands. On National Forest System lands, a special-use permit is required when any individual or organization is conducting outfitting and guiding activities or services for gain.

Forest Service manual direction (FSM 2703.1) requires completion of an analysis of the need to use National Forest System lands for commercial activities prior to issuance of a special use permit for that activity. FSM 2703.1 states that the following items need to be considered when evaluating requests for use of National Forest System Lands:

- Determination that the proposed activity conforms to the Forest land and resource management plan).
- Environmental analysis of the project proposal (FSM 1950).
- Analysis of the need to use National Forest System lands.
- Analysis of the appropriateness of the use on National Forest System lands.

Forest Service policy contained within FSH 2709.11 41.53(c) includes the following:

Authorize only those outfitting and guiding activities that are consistent with the applicable land management plan and that meet the screening criteria in 36 CFR 251.54(e) and FSH 2709.11, chapter 10.

Do not authorize any development or permanent improvements in non-wilderness in the National Forest System for outfitting and guiding services, except when there is a demonstrated public need and the structures, improvements, or installations have negligible value and minimal impact on national forest resources, as with hitching posts, corrals, tent frames, permitted access routes, and shelters.

Do not authorize any development, improvements, or installations in wilderness areas for the purpose of convenience to the holder or the holder’s clients. Do not authorize any caches in wilderness areas. Do not authorize permanent structures, improvements, or installations in wilderness areas unless they are necessary to meet minimum requirements for administration of the area for the purposes of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1133c).

Work with other Federal agencies, State and local authorities, outfitters and guides, outfitting and guiding organizations, and other interested parties to ensure that outfitting and guiding activities are consistent with applicable laws and regulations and to identify unauthorized outfitting and guiding activities. Follow procedures in FSM 5300 in investigating and preventing the occurrence of unauthorized outfitting and guiding activities.

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Do not issue a separate permit for outfitting or guiding activities (such as cross-country skiing or horseback riding) to a holder of a permit or term permit for a commercial public service site (such as a pack station or resort) when the outfitting or guiding activities are part of commercial public service site operations and the commercial public service site would not exist without the outfitting and guiding activities. Include the outfitting and guiding activities in a supplement to the term special use permit.

Do not authorize use when an applicant owns no tangible assets, lacks the prerequisites to conduct outfitting and guiding (such as a state license, liability insurance, and equipment), and would serve only as an intermediary for others providing those services on National Forests System lands.

Take into account applicable provisions of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 3101-3126, in issuing and administering outfitting and guiding permits in the Alaska Region.

Applicable Recreation Objectives

Recreation objectives, stated in FSM 2302, that apply to outfitting and guiding in general are:

Serve visitors and local communities. Provide a broad range of nature and heritage-based outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities for the responsible use and enjoyment of local communities and their visitors.

In collaboration with communities and other providers of outdoor recreation, use visitor and local community characteristics and preferences for recreation and tourism activities, settings, experiences, and benefits to guide recreation planning, management, marketing, and monitoring.

Identify and enhance recreational, scenic, and culturally distinctive landscapes that comprise special places to provide outstanding quality and diverse recreation opportunities.

Identify, analyze, and monitor the changing demographic composition of the country and regional market areas to adapt recreation settings, facilities, and programs for greater use, enjoyment and understanding of the National Forest System.

Strive to provide sustainable recreation opportunities and programs that equitably serve the needs of local communities and visitors.

Strive to protect and enhance natural, scenic, cultural, wilderness, and wild and scenic rivers resources.

- a. Create an integrated and sustainable program that fosters conservation of natural and cultural resources.

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Reduce the impacts and conflicts resulting from recreational use through education, management, monitoring, and enforcement.

Preserve an enduring resource of wilderness and wild and scenic rivers for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Address public safety through utilization of appropriate risk management approaches across the spectrum of recreation settings.

Forest Service Special Use policy for outfitting and guiding provided in FSH 2709.11, Chapter 40, Section 41.53c states:

Authorize only those outfitting and guiding activities that are consistent with the applicable land management plan and that meet the screening criteria in 36 CFR 251.54(e) and FSH 2709.11, chapter 10.

Work with other Federal agencies, State and local authorities, outfitters, and outfitter and guide organizations to ensure that outfitting and guiding activities are consistent with applicable laws and regulations and to identify unauthorized outfitting and guiding activities.

Follow procedures in FSM 5300 in investigating and taking action to prevent the occurrence of unauthorized outfitting and guiding activities.

Wilderness

Objectives for wilderness management provided in FSM 2323.11 are to:

Provide, consistent with management of the area as wilderness, opportunities for public use, enjoyment, and understanding of the wilderness, through experiences that depend upon a wilderness setting.

Provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Forest Service policy addressing recreation management in Wilderness found in FSM 2323.12 states:

Maximize visitor freedom within the wilderness. Minimize direct controls and restrictions. Apply controls only when they are essential for protection of the wilderness resource and after indirect measures have failed.

Use information, interpretation, and education as the primary tools for management of wilderness visitors.

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Manage for recreation activities that are dependent on the wilderness environment so that a minimum of adaptations within wilderness are necessary to accommodate recreation. Consistent with management as wilderness, permit outfitter/guide operations where they are necessary to help segments of the public use and enjoy wilderness areas for recreational or other wilderness purposes.

Forest Service policy addressing outfitter and guide operations in Wilderness found in FSM 2323.13g states that managers should:

Address the need for and role of outfitters in the forest plan. The plan must address the type, number, and amount of recreation use that is to be allocated to outfitters. Ensure that outfitters provide their service to the public in a manner that is compatible with use by other wilderness visitors and that maintains the wilderness resource.

Approve only temporary structures and facilities for outfitter and guide operations necessary to properly meet their public service in a manner compatible with the wilderness environment. These structures shall be located away from main trails, streams, lakes, key interest features, and non-outfitted public use areas. Specify in forest plans, subsequent implementation schedules, or special use permits what improvements are permitted and their locations.

Ensure that outfitters remove all equipment and material, other than structures authorized to remain such as dismantled structure frames and poles made of native material, from the wilderness at the end of each season. Do not permit caches, and phase out existing ones on a planned basis. Do not allow permanent improvements such as cabins, toilet buildings, or tent frames with floors and sides. Further direction for managing outfitter and guides operations is found in section 2324.3, FSM 2343, FSM 2700 and FSH 2309.19, the Wilderness Management Handbook.

Appendix B. Specific Forest-wide Direction from the Coconino Forest Plan

Applicable Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines are listed below.

Issue and administer dispersed recreation special-use authorizations to provide needed recreation opportunities, minimize user conflicts, and ensure public safety (Amendment 9, 12/92, replacement page 51)

Evaluate outfitter-guide needs for the Forest during the first decade. Solicit outfitter-guide service for significant public needs within 2 years after identification. (pg. 57, Dispersed Recreation)

Require bird guides to apply for and obtain a special use permit. A condition of the permit shall be that they obtain a sub-permit under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Master endangered species permit. The permit should stipulate the sites, dates, number of visits and maximum group size permissible. (Mexican Spotted Owl, 65-1)

Amendment 17 for Lake Mary/Flagstaff (2002) amended the Forest Plan to include additional goals and objectives for a portion of the FRD. The following are applicable to this project:

FLEA wide goals/objectives:

Manage for social encounters, signing, scenery, and a sense of exploration that meets the ROS objectives.

Use ROS objectives to aid in determining appropriate types and numbers of individual, groups, outfitter/guides, and special uses.

Manage recreation use to stay within the capacity for ROS objectives with the exception of holiday weekend use levels that may temporarily on a short-term basis exceed capacity in some locations, such as the Cinder Hills OHV MA.

Management activities should generally comply with the requirements (206-62)

Outfitter/Guides Goals and Objectives:

Commercial activities are consistent with management area emphasis and ROS objectives. Commercial activities support Forest Service goals and provide high quality outdoor recreation, interpretation, and education activities that complement the Forest Service mission.

Special-use proposals are consistent with desired conditions. New applications for commercial use are approved based on the ability and willingness of the applicant to meet the goals of the Forest Plan.

Standards

Manage outfitter/guide use to stay within capacities that meet ROS objectives.

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Award new outfitter/guide permits competitively by soliciting applications/proposals. In general, reject unsolicited proposals.

Make outfitter/guide permits available based on a suitable mix of guided and non-guided public capacity. This mix may vary by type of activity and/or season of use.

Guidelines

Determine outfitter/guide service capacity for the FLEA area.

Review and adjust existing commercial uses to meet *Forest Plan* direction and ROS objectives.

The table below shows objectives for the number of social encounters within each of the ROS settings for Forest Service permitted commercial tour operators only. These objectives should apply to commercial tours.

ROS Setting	Social Encounters (All Users)
Roaded Natural	No Objective
Semi-Primitive Motorized	15 per day
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	15 per day
Primitive	6 per day

Reduce the use-level coefficients shown in this table as necessary to reflect usable acres, patterns of use, and general attractiveness of the specific management area type as described in the ROS Users Guide.

Use-level allocations will range from no allocation within some Primitive and Semi-primitive Non-motorized ROS areas to relatively high use allocations within some Roaded Natural areas. Other more site-specific resource concerns, such as the presence of significant archeological sites, threatened, endangered, or sensitive wildlife habitat, and areas with sensitive soils, will also influence outfitter/guide allocations.

Require current and future guiding (except hunting) to occur on Forest Service system roads and trails, or on designated routes mapped in an operating plan approved through an interdisciplinary analysis. In general, do not allow repetitive cross-country routes.

Generally, do not place additional outfitter/guide activities or group activities in the Mt.Elden/Dry Lake Hills Trail System, Pumphouse Wash, Deadman Wash, Walnut Canyon from Fisher Point east, any spring or perennial stream site, except in support of approved research and/or to improve safety or provide site rehabilitation.

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If current outfitter/guides cease operations and the activity is considered to be desirable after review, conduct a solicitation process for replacement.

When a proposed use is not consistent with National Forest management direction and can be accommodated on private land, encourage recreation participants to use private land for their activities. Communicate and cooperate with other agencies and businesses to look for ways of providing for activities that are different from the Forest Service mission on properties managed by other agencies or businesses.

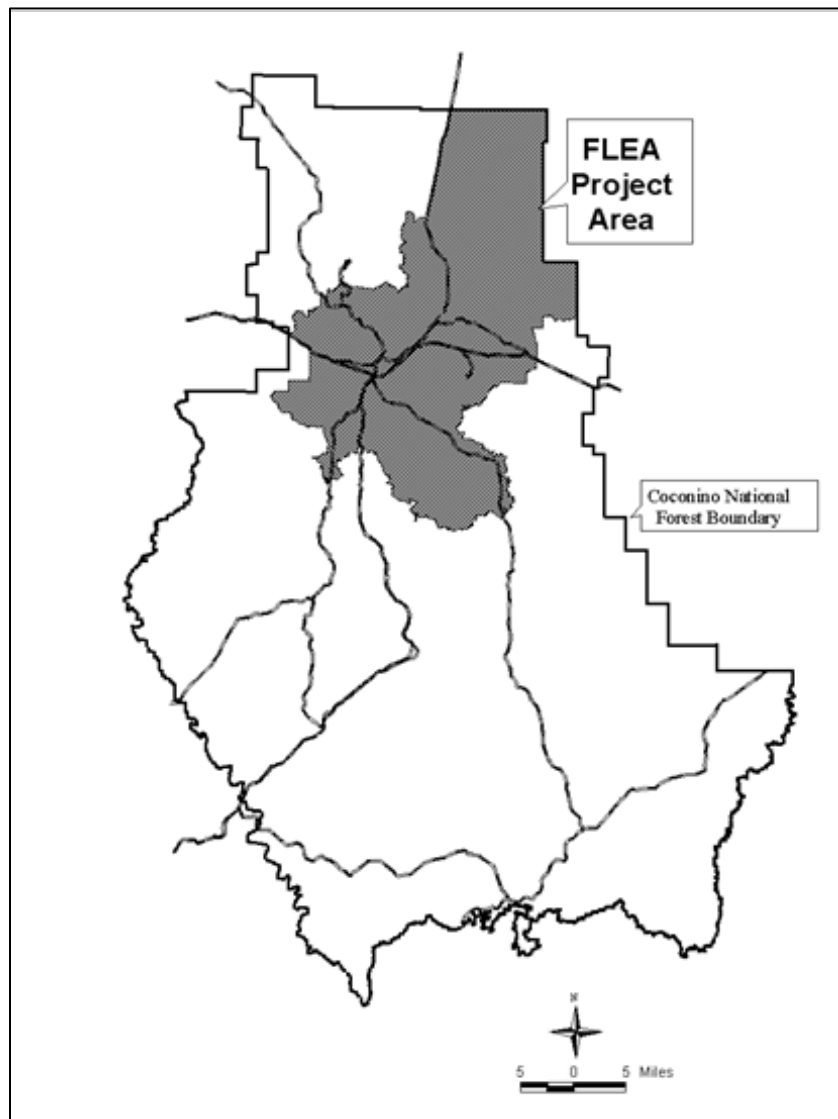
Outfitter/guide permits are administered to guidelines as defined by “Meaningful Measures”.

Before permitting outfitter/guides adjacent to National Monuments, contact the National Park Service for coordination. Outfitter/guides might also help meet the mission of the National Park Service in the National Monuments or on adjacent National Forest lands. (206-65)

West Management Area MA 38:

Per the FLEA Area-wide direction, focus special use permits away from urban/residential areas. Generally, do not place additional outfitter/guide activities or group activities in Pumphouse Wash, any spring or perennial stream site, except in support of approved research and/or to improve safety or provide site rehabilitation.(206-16)

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Appendix C. Supply and Demand Analysis

Several factors, relating to societal, lifestyle, and demographic trends can affect recreation participation. Race, ethnicity, and gender also affect recreation participation. The aging of the baby boomer generation, income changes, time constraints, changes in family structure, and immigration are examples of trends that can all affect recreation. Some specific examples of how trends affect recreation are that people are tending to take more frequent, shorter trips, rather than the traditional two-week vacation); many people are looking for opportunities that are close to home and more families and singles are recreating.

National Trends

Nationally, the 2010 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report found that nearly 50% of Americans ages six and older participated in outdoor recreation in 2009. That's a slight increase from 2008 and equates to a total of 137.8 million Americans. Forty-two percent of outdoor participants said the economy impacted how often they participated in outdoor activities in 2009. Sixty-two percent of outdoor participants travel one hour or less to participate in outdoor recreation. A second national source for trends is the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE). NSRE represents the continuation of the ongoing National Recreation Survey series that began in 1960. Surveys focus on outdoor recreation participation and personal demographics for people 16 years and older in the United States. For the U.S. population as a whole in the 2010-11 period, participation in walking for pleasure (almost 85 percent of them/us) and family gatherings outdoors (just over 74 percent) were the most widely popular activities. Participation rates for these activities had changed very little in recent years. Participation in swimming, diving and related activities and in sightseeing were both over 60 percent in the earlier 2005 - 2009 period, and along with viewing or photographing birds (41 percent in 2010-11), these were the three activities which had grown the fastest. Participation in sightseeing increased 8.1 percent, followed by viewing birds (up 5.7 percent) and participating in swimming activities (up 4.8 percent).

Other activities with increasing participation rates were viewing or photographing other wildlife besides birds, boating, fishing, and snow/ice activities. Participation rates for four activities appear to have decreased between 2005-09 and 2010-11. They include picnicking, bicycling, developed camping and primitive camping. The participation rate for picnicking showed the percentage-point decrease during this period, falling by more than 4.0 percent.

As far as demographics, Cordell (2010) found that participation rates for outdoor activities are significantly higher among males, non-Hispanic Whites, young to middle-aged people, people with college education, middle to higher income people, and rural residents. Green et al (2010) compiled constraints to participating in outdoor recreation, and found that "fear of the forest" was cited by Hispanics, Asian/Pacific Islanders and lower-income households, among other reasons. Immigrants as well as people from lower income households cited "feel unwelcome or uncomfortable."

Projected Recreation Use—Long Term Trends

Key Findings through the Year 2060

Supply factors such as proximity and availability of recreation resources are important in determining whether and to what degree individuals recreate. Previous research has shown that the amount of outdoor recreation settings or opportunities available to an individual will affect the individual's choice and intensity of participation in given activities. For example, whether an individual skis and how often can in part be explained by the proximity of skiing opportunities. Likewise, most dispersed outdoor recreation activities, such as viewing wildlife, require access to wildlife habitat on private and public forests, ranges, and wetlands. Bowker et al (2010) estimates that the fastest growing activities over the next 50 years are developed skiing (20 to 50 percent), undeveloped skiing (9 to 31 percent), challenge activities (6 to 18 percent increase), equestrian activities (3 to 19 percent), and motorized water activities (-3 to 15 percent). Alternatively, a number of activities will experience a decline in adult participation rates. These include visiting primitive areas (0 to -5 percent), motorized off-road activities (0 to -18 percent), motorized snow activities (2 to -11 percent), hunting (-22 to -31 percent), fishing (-3 to -10 percent), and floating activities (3 to -11 percent).

Summary: Common Themes for National and Regional Long-Term Trends

- Forested settings continue to be a draw for people viewing scenery;
- The economy impacts how people participate;
- A majority travel less than an hour to participate;
- Participation by kids in the outdoors is declining;
- Outdoor participation supports land conservation and volunteerism;
- Hunting and fishing are declining but wildlife watching has increased;
- Decline in snow-dependent recreational activities;
- The national obesity epidemic is raising awareness of the value of public lands;
- The health care industry is becoming a stronger partner with land managers.

Regional Trends

Arizona State Parks in collaboration with a guiding group of 17 outdoor recreation professionals conducted two surveys in 2012. The first was an online survey targeting Outdoor Recreation Providers and land managers. The second was an online survey targeting Involved Recreation Users of Arizona recreation areas.

The online Involved Recreation User survey covers the participation and future needs of both Arizonans and a small group of visitors from outside of the state in 37 outdoor recreation activities, and benefits the public perceives from outdoor recreation. Arizona residents were also asked about funding priorities, outdoor recreation issues and how their recreation experience has changed in the last five years. These results are further broken down and examined by the

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specific high frequency user groups (e.g., hikers, OHV users, hunters, etc). The information gathered is interesting but does not seek to represent Arizona residents as a whole, since these respondents were targeted for this survey was constituents of outdoor recreation agencies, who had either attended programs or signed up for email newsletters or updates.

The 3 visiting or learning activities that the largest percentage of Involved Users participated in were:

- Visiting a natural or wilderness area
- Recreational motorized driving on maintained roads
- Wildlife watching or nature photography

The five land-based activities that the largest percentage of Involved Users participated in were:

- Day hiking
- Walking, jogging or running on trails or at a park
- Tent camping

The 3 water-based activities that the largest percentage of Involved Users participated in were:

- Fishing
- Swimming in a lake or stream
- Motorized boating

The most common snow-based activity that the largest percentage of Involved Users participated in was snow play or sledding.

According to the Outdoor Foundation's Participation Reports, although the number of people 6 and older recreating outdoors in the U.S. has increased by 5% since 2006, overall the percentage of the population participating in outdoor recreation has remained fairly steady over this time. Also, the total number of outdoor outings declined slightly in 2009 and 2010, but has rebounded in 2011. Participation rates are also highest in the Mountain region which includes Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada and other western states. (SORP, 2013)

Recreation participation is strongly driven by proximity and population. According to census figures, the population of Arizona has increased 5.3% in the period 2010-2013. (For reference, the USA population has increased 3.3 %.) In 2013, Arizona population was 6,731,484. The median household income in 2013 was \$49,744 as compared with overall USA median income of \$53,046. Coconino County itself grew 5.3% in population from 2010-2014.

The Outdoor Foundation [a 501(c) (3) organization affiliated with the Outdoor Industry Association whose mission is to inspire and grow future generations of outdoor enthusiasts] studies participation in non-motorized outdoor recreation. The Foundation's 2013 Topline Report indicated that participation in outdoor recreation is increasing nationwide, with nearly 50 percent (141.9 million) of Americans over the age of six participating in at least one outdoor recreation activity in 2012. In addition, Americans are more active than ever, participating in an

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average of 87.4 outings annually per person for a total of 12.4 billion outings. The most popular activities, measured by total number of participants, are running/jogging, road bicycling, freshwater fishing, day hiking and camping. Wildlife viewing, camping in RVs, bird watching, saltwater fishing, and hunting rounded out the top ten.

Activities with increasing demand included triathlon (nontraditional/off-road) with a 40% change between 2009-2012; adventure racing (35% change) and traditional triathlon (30% change).

Supply

Arizona is blessed regionally with an abundance of recreational opportunities. Federal, state and private providers offer a variety of experiences from which visitors can choose. The following information is from the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2013)

Of Arizona's 113,417 square miles, 42% or 47,635 square miles is federal public land. These lands are managed by various agencies most of whom are responsible for providing for both the outdoor recreation needs of the state's 6.7 million residents as well as for the protection and preservation of land for future generations.

National Park Service

In Arizona, the NPS manages twenty-two sites totaling 4.6 million acres including thirteen national monuments, one memorial, three national historic sites/parks, one national historic trail, two national recreation areas, three national parks, and four wilderness areas totaling 444,055 acres. The NPS areas include visitor centers and trails to historic, cultural, and natural and scenic sites. National Monuments near the Flagstaff Ranger District include Walnut Canyon, Sunset Crater and Wupatki. Grand Canyon National Park lies about two hours' drive to the north. The National Monuments offer hiking, scenic driving, cultural history, and birdwatching.

Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages more than 12.2 million surface acres of public lands, along with another 17.5 million subsurface acres within Arizona. There are nine field offices throughout the state that provide on-the-ground management of dispersed outdoor recreation activities including camping, backpacking, hiking, biking, boating, fishing, off-highway vehicle driving, picnicking, wildlife viewing, and cultural site touring on land that is mostly undeveloped. The BLM-managed lands offer trails, camping, off-road vehicle recreation, and access to rivers, archaeological and historic sites. The BLM in Arizona hosts approximately 235 developed recreation sites, including twenty campgrounds, sixteen historic sites, sixteen archeological sites, four national backcountry byways, sixty-one trailheads, and two off-road vehicle areas. There are several concession resorts operating on public lands that complement the BLM's dispersed recreation settings by providing full-service campgrounds, trailer and recreational vehicle parks. The Arizona BLM manages nationally designated areas that include five national monuments, three conservation areas, forty-seven wilderness areas and three nationally designated trails. The closest BLM National Monument to the Flagstaff Ranger District is Agua Fria, located 40 miles north of Phoenix.

US Forest Service

There are six national forests in Arizona including Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, Coronado, Kaibab, Prescott, and Tonto. These national forests offer a wide variety of opportunities from winter sports to summer activities like horseback riding, camping and hiking. Several outfitter-guides offer services on these forests in several capacities, including rafting, mountain biking, jeep tours, climbing and backpacking.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Fish and Wildlife Service manages nine National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) in Arizona covering more than 1.7 million acres that are open for wildlife viewing. The FWS manages four wilderness areas totaling 1.3 million acres. NWRs provide opportunities for six wildlife-dependent recreational uses—hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation—that, when compatible, are the priority general public uses of the Refuge System. There are no wildlife refuges particularly close to the Flagstaff Ranger District.

Arizona State Parks

Established in 1957, Arizona State Parks manages thirty parks and natural areas distributed throughout the state, totaling over 64,000 acres not including water surface area in seven reservoirs. They offer developed recreational facilities and a variety of activities including picnicking, camping, fishing, boating, canoeing, swimming, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, nature study, environmental education, and wildlife viewing and facilities including visitor centers, museums, historic and prehistoric sites, and a botanical garden. State parks located near the analysis area include Riordan Mansion, Slide Rock, Fort Verde, Deadhorse Ranch and Red Rock State Parks and the Verde River Greenway State Natural Area. These parks offer hiking, fishing, camping, horseback riding, and nature viewing, depending on location.

County

Coconino County operates six county parks and two conservation areas totaling 2,800 acres, including the Fort Tuthill County Park, which has an undeveloped snow play area, a bike park, a ropes challenge course, five picnic Ramadas, an archery range, a campground, and a trail system.. In addition, there are two natural areas nearby with rare wetlands where visitors can see bird life.

Private Sector

Nonprofit organizations and private businesses provide a wide diversity of outdoor recreational opportunities throughout the state. Local land trusts acquire and manage nature preserves and open space within their communities. Local historical societies offer museums and restored historic sites open to the public. National organizations such as the Nature Conservancy and Archaeological Conservancy acquire and manage more remote natural and cultural areas. Private businesses such as tour guides, outfitters, and rental companies offer a wide range of services to the recreating public. Golf courses, sports fields and arenas, and water parks are popular spots for

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recreation. Many of these commercial recreation areas are associated with local hotels and resorts.

There are also several prominent ranches on the District that offer guided services to the public.

Appendix D. Evaluation Criteria Rankings

The following tables show each district area need ranking, based on separate evaluative criteria ranking sessions conducted by Forest staff. See the main document for explanation of ranking definitions and criteria.

FRD Evaluation

Activity/ Criteria (H,M,L)	At-risk youth, non- traditional, disabled visitors	Education	KSAs	Regional Availability	Resource Impact Mitigation	Equip- ment	Benefit to Local Economy	Safety/ Risk	Demand	Overall Need	Notes
Avalanche awareness/ mountaineering	L	L	H	L	L	H	L	H	L	M	More of a SAR need
Backcountry skiing/snowboarding	M	M	H	L	L	M	M	H	M	H	
Backpacking	H	H	M	L	M	M	M	M	M	M	
Big game hunting/ horseback	M	L	M	L	M	H	L	M	L	M	
Big game hunting/ Non-horse	L	L	M	H	L	M	M	M	M	M	
Biking, mountain	M	L	M	M	H	M	M	M	H	M	
Birdwatching	M	H	L	L	L	L	L	L	M	L	
Bouldering	H	M	M	L	L	L	M	M	M	M	
Canoeing/kayak/ SUP	H	M	M	L	L	M	M	H	M	M	
Cross country ski/ snowshoe	M	H	M	L	L	M	M	M	L	M	
Dog sledding	L	M	H	L	L	H	L	L	M	M	
Drop camps	L	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	
Nature-based ed	M	H	L	M	L	L	M	L	M	M	
Fishing	L	L	M	L	M	M	M	L	L	L	
Hiking, day	L	H	L	M	L	L	L	L	M	L	14L
Horseback (day)	H	M	H	M	H	H	M	M	M	H	
Horseback (overnight)	L	H	L	L	H	H	M	M	L	M	
Photography	L	H	M	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	Most have own equip
Rafting											No locations
Road riding (bike)	M	L	L	L	L	M	M	M	H	M	

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Activity/ Criteria (H,M,L)	At-risk youth, non- traditional, disabled visitors	Education	KSAs	Regional Availability	Resource Impact Mitigation	Equip- ment	Benefit to Local Economy	Safety/ Risk	Demand	Overall Need	Notes
Rock Climbing	M	M	H	L	M	H	M	H	H	H	
Shuttle service to Arizona Snowbowl	M	L	L	H	L	H	H	H	H	H	
Snowmobiling	L	L	H	L	L	H	M	H	L	M	

L=9-14; M=15-19; H=20 and above

Wilderness Evaluation

Activity/ Criteria (H,M,L)	Non- traditional visitors	Wilderness Education	KSAs	Resource Impact Mitigation	Opportunity for Solitude	Wilderness Dependent	Overall Need	Notes
Avalanche awareness	L	L	H	L	H	H	M	Peaks is all Wilderness
Backcountry skiing	H	L	H	L	M	H	M	
Backpacking	H	H	M	M	M	L	M	
Big game hunting horseback	L	L	M	M	M	M	L	Other areas available
Big game hunting no horse	L	L	M	M	M	L	L	
Birdwatching	L	H	L	L	H	L	M	
Bouldering	M	M	M	L	M	H	M	Many canyon locations
Canoeing								No locations
Cross country skiing/snowshoe	M	H	M	L	H	L	M	
Drop camps	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	
Nature-based ed	H	H	L	L	M	M	M	If W specific could rank higher for W depend
Fishing	L	L	M	M	H	M	M	Limited locations
Hiking, day	M	H	L	L	H	M	M	
Horseback riding, day	H	M	H	H	L	L	M	
Horseback, overnight	L	H	H	H	L	L	M	
Photography	L	H	M	L	H	M	M	May depend on location
Rock climbing	H	M	H	M	M	H	M	

L=9-14; M=15-19; H=20 and above

Appendix E. Actual Use

This data was derived from information in the Special Uses Oracle database (SUDs) and from district records, collected in 2015.

Table E-1. FRD Recreation Events/Non-Commercial Group Permits

Year	Total Number of Permits	Types of Events	Total Number of People
2010	81	Church events, weddings, reunions, dog trials, bow shooting events, running, biking, canoeing, winter sports	15,376
2011	81	Church events, weddings, reunions, dog trials, bow shooting events, running, biking, canoeing, winter sports	15,739
2012	82	Church events, weddings, reunions, dog trials, bow shooting events, running, biking, canoeing, winter sports	17,460
2013	79	Church events, weddings, reunions, dog trials, bow shooting events, running, biking, canoeing, winter sports	17,138
2014	72	Church events, weddings, reunions, dog trials, bow shooting events, running, biking, canoeing, winter sports	17,186

Table E2. FRD, 2010-2014 Outfitter-Guide Actual Use

Activity Type	2010 auth/used	2011 auth/used	2012 auth/used	2013 auth/used	2014 auth/used	2010- 2014 Actual Use Percent
Horseback and Sleigh Rides	16%	0%	33%	44%	69%	33%
Climbing	59%	69%	67%	103%	89%	77%
Wilderness LNT	93%	99%	82%	90%	97%	92%

NA= the activity was not authorized.