

Changes between Preliminary Draft Plan and Draft Plan

Gila National Forest Plan Revision

December 2019

The Gila National Forest (NF) Draft Forest Plan is expected to be published in the Federal Register in early January, 2020. This is not the first version of the new Forest Plan has made available to the public for comment. In March 2018, the Gila NF released a preliminary draft of the new Forest Plan. Public comments on the preliminary from cooperating agencies, governmental agencies, non-governmental agencies, tribes, and other members of the public were incorporated into the plan, along with additional internal work by Gila NF staff and leadership. This document is intended to help members of the public review and comment on the Draft Forest Plan by highlighting some of the major differences between the preliminary draft and draft plan documents.

Organizational Changes to Chapters

- Chapter 1 which contained introductory information about the purpose of forest plans and the plan revision process has been combined with Chapter 2, which contained a description of the plan area, distinctive roles and contributions, and a summary of the Assessment and Needs for Change. This is now Chapter 1.

New Sections

- Chapter 1 now contains a section titled “The Vision”, which describes the Forest Supervisor’s intent for plan implementation and provides context for the Gila NF’s distinctive roles and contributions.
- Objectives have been added throughout Chapters 2 (formerly Chapter 3) and 3 (formerly Chapter 4).
- Added Plan Management Approaches heading under Chapter 2-Forest-Wide Plan Direction which contains the Management Approach to Change and Uncertainty, which was previously at the end of Chapter 2, and a new management approach called Management Approach to Restoration. Both of these management approaches apply forest-wide.
- Developed Mitigation section in the Management Approach to Change and Uncertainty
- Chapter 3-Designated and Management Area Plan Direction now contains direction for three additional management areas. These are Recommended Wilderness, Proposed Research Natural Areas, and Rare and Endemic Plant Management Areas.
- Chapter 4-Suitability and Estimated Vegetation Management Practices has been developed.
- Chapter 5-Monitoring Plan has been developed.
- Appendix B – Proposed and Possible Management Practices has been developed.
- Appendix C – Maps has been developed.
- Appendix D – Focal Species Rationale has been developed.

Changes in Sections

Chapter 1

- Reorganized content under the Plan Components, Management/Geographic Areas, Suitability of Lands and Other Content for clarity.
- Added at-risk species, ecological integrity, historic range of variation, restoration and sustainability to key plan concepts. Incorporated Terrestrial Ecological Units into Ecological Response Unit concept description.
- The section title “A Holistic Approach” has been changed to “An Integrated Approach”.

Chapter 2

- Management Approach to Change and Uncertainty
 - Added Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment information
 - Expanded Landscape section
 - Changed “Species-Specific” section title to “Species and Populations” and expanded content
- Under Background and Description for Ecosystems and Watersheds, added explanatory information about how the objectives for each Ecological Response Unit were developed under the section title “Upland Ecological Response Unit Objectives”.
- Added objectives for most Ecological Response Units
- All Upland Ecological Response Units
 - Added five standards
 - Changed guideline 2
 - Added terms to mini-glossary associated with the plan standards
- Under each Ecological Response Unit section identifying at-risk species that use those habitats, added asterisk to federally listed species associated with each Ecological Response Unit to differentiate between them and Species of Conservation Concern
- Added fine-scale desired condition for organic ground cover and herbaceous vegetation to all Ecological Response units with fine-scale desired conditions
- Removed direction for PJ Evergreen Shrub; during finalization of the Terrestrial Ecological Unit Inventory, it was determined that these areas are best classified as PJ Woodland
- Expanded management approach for Spruce-Fir Forest
- Grasslands
 - Moved quantitative desired condition for ecological status from mid-scale to landscape-scale; retained qualitative desired condition for species composition at mid-scale
- Soils
 - Added objectives
 - Refined wording in standard 1
 - Refined wording in guidelines 1 and 2
 - Added guideline 3
 - Changed definition of high-risk soils and adjusted glossary to reflect changes
- Watersheds
 - Refined desired conditions
 - Added objectives
- Riparian and Aquatic Ecosystems
 - Refined and added to introductory narrative
 - Refined desired conditions
 - Added objective
 - Combined standards 1 and 4
 - Removed “where appropriate” from guideline 2
 - Language changes for clarity in guideline 3
 - Added language to guideline 5 for clarity
 - Added to and refined Restoration and Relationships management approach
- Cliffs and Rocky Features
 - Refined language in guidelines 3 and 4 for clarity
- Caves and Abandoned Mine Lands
 - Added clarification in a footnote that there are currently no caves nominated or designated as significant on the Gila NF; related direction is retained
- Wildlife, Fish and Plants
 - Added objectives

- Added guideline related to cleaning up unneeded or excess materials related to wildlife habitat improvement projects.
- Rare and Endemic Plant and Animal Species
 - Added guideline related to collection
- Nonnative Invasive Species
 - Added objectives
 - Moved guideline 1 to a standard
 - Added six new standards, one guideline and expanded two existing standards related to herbicide use
- Air Quality
 - Removed standard 3
 - Replaced reference to emission reduction techniques appendix with a reference to current guidance document
- Community Relationships
 - Expands on the Relationships management approach
- Cultural Resources
 - Added 5 desired conditions statements
 - Removed guideline 1 and added 4 additional guidelines
 - Added Heritage Program Management and Cultural Resources Overview management approaches
- Wildland Fire and Fuels Management
 - Removed standard 6
 - Refined language in guideline 2
 - Corrections/clarifying statements incorporated into Infrastructure, Restoration and Relationships management approach
 - Incorporated opening prescribed fire areas to fuelwood collection prior to burning to Fire, Fuels and Relationships management approach
- Water Uses
 - Corrected over-generalized information about water rights and acequias in the introductory narrative
- Livestock Grazing
 - Added desired condition related to completing environmental analyses in a timely manner
 - Added objectives
 - Changed language in standard 1 and made standard 1a a separate standard
 - Moved standard 5 to a guideline
 - Added standard about congressional grazing guidelines
 - Adjusted language in guideline 2 to reflect changes in the Soils section
 - Added more specificity and specific exceptions to guideline 3
 - Split guideline 4 into two different guidelines, one for unplanned disturbance and one for planned disturbance
 - Removed guideline 6
 - Added a guideline for collaborative monitoring
 - Reordered management approaches
 - Expanded Restoration and Relationships, Livestock and Wildlife Conflicts, Range Infrastructure and Partnerships management approaches
 - Added Drought Plan, Working with Other Entities and Rangeland Monitoring management approaches

- Timber, Forest and Botanical Products
 - Removed standard 4
 - Moved guideline 4 to a standard
 - Added “clearcutting” language to standard 6 to create more obvious alignment with the requirements of the National Forest Management Act
 - Expanded Integrating Restoration and Social, Economic, and Cultural Diversity and Stability management approach
 - Expanded Firewood Program management approach
 - Added Timber Suitability management approach
- Lands
 - Added objectives
 - Refined language in standard 1
 - Removed guideline 3
 - Refined language in guideline 7 to better align with the law
- Lands Special Uses
 - Removed standard 1
 - Removed guideline 1 and added two new guidelines related to special use permits, designated wilderness and the “Very Large Array”
 - Added Relationships management approach related to the “Very Large Array”
- Minerals (Salable/Mineral Materials)
 - Removed desired condition 3
 - Added two guidelines related to analysis and Best Management Practices
- Roads
 - Added objective
 - Moved guideline 2 to a standard and refined language
- Facilities
 - Added standard related to Best Management Practices
- Sustainable Recreation
 - Removed desired condition 3
 - Added objective
 - Added standard related to length of stay limits
 - Added Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) Desired Conditions management approach
- Developed Recreation
 - Removed desired condition 3
 - Added objective related to the removed desired condition 3
 - Added standard related to Best Management Practices
 - Expanded Developed Recreation and Sustainability management approach
- Dispersed Recreation
 - Added objectives
 - Removed guideline 1
- Special Uses (Recreation)
 - Removed standards 2 and 3 and added standard for outfitter-guide activities in wilderness
 - Added one additional guideline
- Trails
 - Added objectives
 - Expanded Outreach and Education and Sustainability management approaches
 - Added Provision of Current Public Information on Trail Conditions and Closures, Relationships, and Trail Priorities management approaches
- Motorized Trails

- Deleted desired condition 5
- Nonmotorized Trails
 - Added language to guideline 3 referring to Sustainable Recreation Action Plan
 - Added one guideline related to wilderness character

Chapter 3

- Wilderness
 - Split desired condition 1 into two separate desired condition statements and refined language
 - Added two desired condition statements related to motorized and mechanized intrusions, and tribal and cultural values
 - Added objectives
 - Revised language in standards 3 and 4
 - In standard 5, changed the default group size limit from 15 persons and 20 head of pack and saddle stock to 15 persons and 25 head of pack and saddle stock
 - Revised language to clarify length of stay limits are cumulative days within a 30 day period.
 - Removed standards 9 and 12 and guidelines 5, 15 and 17
 - Expanded Recreation Special Uses management approach
- Inventoried Roadless Areas
 - Added table listing all inventoried roadless areas by name and displaying official acreages to introductory narrative
 - Added Corrections to Minor Cartographic Errors management approach
- Research Natural Areas
 - Changed guideline 5 to be consistent with the desired conditions for ecological processes
 - Added language to guideline 6 to provide direction for prescribed fire when conditions near, but outside the Research Natural Area to not support natural fire spread.
- Continental Divide Trail
 - Added objective
- National Recreation Trails
 - Removed desired condition 9
 - Removed National Recreation Trails Located on Roads management approach
- Wildland Urban Interface
 - Added objective
- Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers
 - Expanded introductory narrative, including addition of table displaying the results of the eligibility study conducted as part of the larger plan revision effort and the preliminary classification
 - Removed standard 2
 - Added Wild and Scenic Rivers Suitability Studies Undertaken to Resolve Resource Management Conflicts management approach
- Utility Corridors
 - Removed desired condition statement 2