



Executive Summary

Sustainable Recreation

Action Plan

2021-2025



Trails and
Wilderness



Developed
Recreation



Access and dispersed
recreation



Tourism and
community



Four Themes

What is Sustainable Recreation All About?

Recreation's Vision...

"Renewing Body and Spirit, Inspiring Passion for the Land."

Recreation's Values...

Connecting people with nature

Providing opportunities for physical, mental and spiritual health

Managing for sustainability

Cultivating stewardship through understanding

Enriching communities

Recreation's Strategy...

We will cultivate enduring partnerships with communities of place and communities of interest.

We will invest in our ability to govern rather than operate.

We will strive for sustainable practices in our operations, programs and facilities.

We will invest in our employees, our facilities and our landscapes.

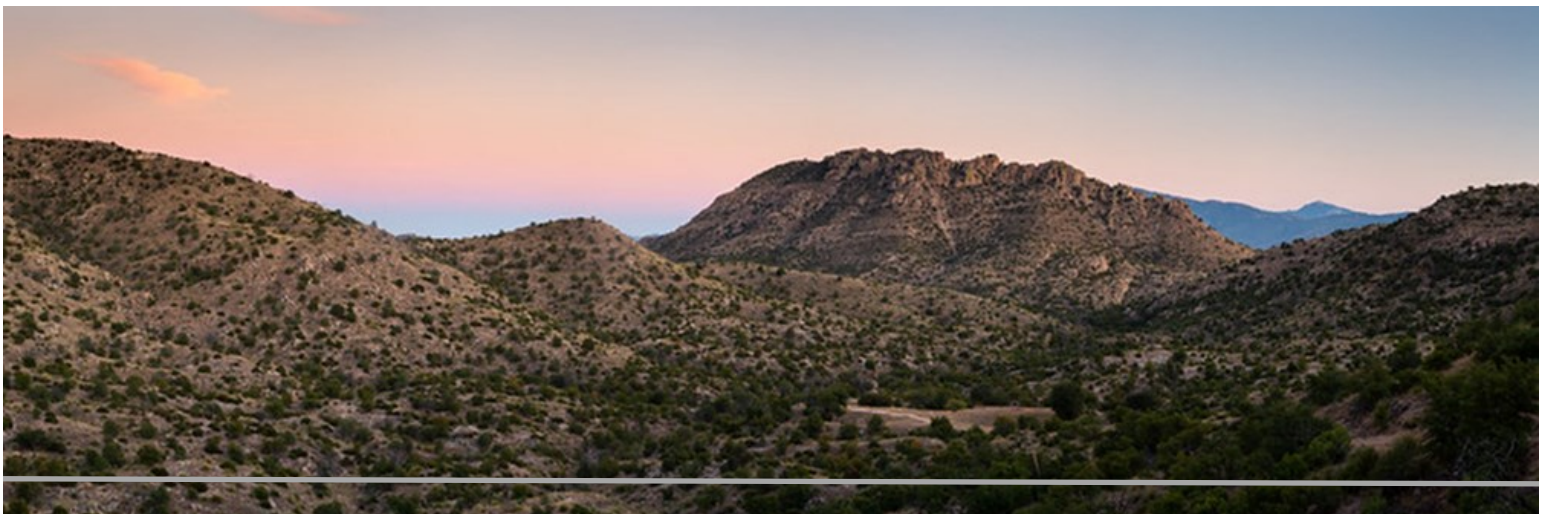
Why does the Coronado National Forest need this Action Plan?

The Action Plan shows us how ...

We implement sustainable recreation values on-the-ground

We overcome our challenges

We follow through with our Forest Plan



What is the Coronado National Forest?

A distinctive and iconic landscape: the Sky Islands.

A special place that has been home to people for millennia, always taking on new meanings and purposes.

The crossroads of north and south, mountains and desert.

A tourism attraction and economic generator.

A place with dedicated, safe, and engaged employees and partners who think and lead creatively.



Mountains We Can Climb

Challenges Facing the Coronado National Forest Recreation Program

Welcoming more people of all cultures and backgrounds to reflect our Southern Arizona community

Building capacity and providing staff the time to work on impactful long-term projects rather than just day-to-day operations

Leveraging outside support without sacrificing our skills, identity, or responsibilities

Protecting Sky Island biodiversity and heritage resources under increased visitation

Tackling deferred maintenance for \$45 million worth of facility assets, including post-wildfire

Having a business mindset without losing sight of the why



Theme: Developed Recreation

Action 1. Asses the viability of **contracted and partner-supported developed site operations** such as restroom and trash service at no less than 40% of all recreation sites

Action 2. Modernize fee payment methods:

- Recreation.gov Digital Passes (forest wide)
- Automated Fee Machines (5 new locations)
- Business vendor program (5 new vendors)

Action 3. Implement our **Great American Outdoors Act project submission strategy** for 2022 to 2025, focusing on reducing big ticket deferred maintenance items and modernizing facilities. Aim to invest at least \$18 million.

Action 4. Increase emphasis on **volunteer camp and site host recruitment and retention** by improving host site quality and investing in reimbursements.

Action 5. Complete at least 7 Concept Plans, relying on the CNF's guidelines for sustainable facility development:

- South Fork Cave Creek Canyon
- Walnut Grove/Rucker Canyon campground
- Parker Canyon Lake
- Mount Lemmon (select locations)
- Madera Canyon (select locations)
- Mount Graham campgrounds
- Pena Blanca Lake

Action 6. Expand the Rooms with a View program by adding Sollers and Canelo cabins while better marketing these facilities and finding solutions for long-term operational capacity



Theme: Trails and Wilderness

Action 1. Implement the **CNF Wilderness Education Plan**

Action 2. Deepen and broaden volunteer capacity through the **Sky Islands Trail Stewards volunteer training** and an Adopt-a-Trail program

Action 3. Work with American Conservation Experience to field a **2-person, long-term Coronado recreation and trails crew** to bolster capacity and lead volunteer events

Action 4. Revise trail maintenance priorities, focusing on “artery” trails that link key destinations. Identify one quarter to one third of the system with no legal public access or very minimal visitor use to the lowest level maintenance status to free up resources for other areas.

Action 5. Use a collaborative and **community-based process to complete trail planning** in the following priority areas, addressing system and unauthorized trails. Identify suitable areas for possible trail development with low natural and cultural resource conflict.

First Priority

- Mount Lemmon
- Pinalenos
- Red Springs Phase 2

Second Priority

- Huachuca Front Range
- Patagonia Vicinity
- East and West Cochise Stronghold
- Whetstones

Action 6. Complete approved trail projects that help distribute use and provide sustainable trail opportunities near communities :

- Arizona National Scenic Trail Temporal Gulch reroute
- Tanque Verde Falls Recreation Enhancement Project
- Perimeter Trail

After completion, review and pursue other promising backyard” trail development opportunities.

Action 7. Gather data on visitor use, wilderness character, and resource condition to support the completion of **Wilderness Management Plans** between 2025 and 2030



Theme: Tourism and Community

Action 1. Pursue opportunities to **respect indigenous use and history** through interpretation and recognition of traditional stories and place names, especially when new sites or trails are developed.

Action 2. Back to basics: **invest in continual improvement of the CNF website and other visitor information** by holding two dedicated content improvement days each year. Follow through on improvements with dedicated resource assistants and seasonal staff.

Action 3. Take a balanced communication approach that includes proactive messages about available opportunities, rather than just a focus on rules and regulations.

- Expand **relationships with destination marketing organizations**, partners and service providers such as Visit Tucson, Cochise County Tourism Council and Gila Valley Chamber of Commerce to promote lesser used recreation areas. Slowly build with small successes, then expand efforts.
- Continue to increase awareness in the community about **business opportunities through the special uses open season** for recreation events and outfitters and guides.

Action 4. Commit to **Spanish translation** of all on-site visitor materials, followed by digital and video products.

Action 5. Continue **enrichment of our social media presence, especially video capacity**. Produce videos on:

- Phase 1: Visitor Experiences and Public Access; Hidden Gems/lesser visited sites
- Phase 2: “How-to” Guides for Visiting Popular Destinations
- Phase 3: Heritage Storytelling

Action 6. Take concrete steps to ensure the CNF is welcoming to those from different cultural backgrounds and different ability levels.

- Integrate an **equity lens on all recreation operations, infrastructure and plans**.
- Maintain **regular dialogue** with equity and diversity-focused organizations through Conservation Conversations and other forums.



Theme: Access and Dispersed Recreation

Action 1. Take a collaborative approach, bringing together agency and nonprofit partners together through the **Coronado Access Initiative** to discuss shared opportunities. Host no fewer than 4 coordination meetings per year. Use these partnerships to increase the share of Forest trail and road access points with legal and physical public access.

Action 2. Deepen operational **partnerships with local governments** for securing legal road access outside forest boundaries.

Action 3. Focus on the following **priority areas for reestablishing public access** that has been lost:

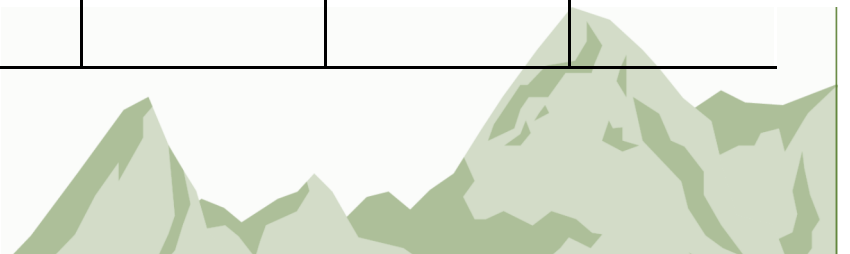
- Western Galiuros
- Northern Whetstones
- Chiricahuas
- Peloncillos

Action 4. Use site condition surveys and other techniques to monitor visitation, understand visitor demographics and natural and cultural resource trends in **high use dispersed camping areas** to identify future priorities for planning and management. Select 3 to 5 dispersed recreation areas for planning in the next action plan.



Schedule of Planning and Major Actions

	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Concept Plan Development	South Fork Day Use Walnut Grove Campground Madera Canyon	Mount Lemmon Parker Canyon Lake Mount Graham Campgrounds	Mount Lemmon Parker Canyon Lake	Pena Blanca Lake Plan implementation	Plan implementation
Trail Planning	Identify Maintenance Priorities	Identify Maintenance Priorities Mount Lemmon Red Spring Phase 2	Mount Lemmon Pinalenos Huachuca Front Range Plan implementation	Selected Second Priority Areas Plan implementation	Plan implementation
Rooms with a View Cabin Program	Add Sollers Cabin to the rental program	Seek RAC approval for Canelo Cabins	Add Canelo Cabins to the rental program		
Developed Recreation Fees and Operations	Launch Recreation.gov Digital Passes Phase 1	Digital Passes Phase 2 Install Automated Fee Machines Contract restroom and trash servicing	Install Automated Fee Machines		
Others	Launch Coronado Access Initiative Phase 1 Video Production	Engage counties on access issues Build tourism/destination marketing organization relationships	Phase 2 Video Production	Phase 3 Video Production	



What We Won't Prioritize

Sustainable recreation principles and common sense require us to recognize we can't do everything at once. The following items will not be prioritized for recreation staff time during the FY21 to FY25 period.

- Wilderness Management Planning
- New developed campground development, except for replacement
- New visitor center development
- In-depth or extended staff involvement in interpretive or education programs
- Large-scale scale interpretive or education site development

These activities may be supported in other way such as offering facilities for public use, issuing special use permits, or providing financial support to partners as funds are available.

How the Plan Was Developed

How This Action Plan Was Prepared

The process to revise the Sustainable Recreation Action Plan revision was launched in October 2020. The Recreation, Heritage and Land Staff Officer identified four themes for the revision after consultation with line officers and staff across the Forest. An outline of the proposed process and timeline was presented to and approved by the FLT in October.

Employee Teams by Theme

Starting in November, teams of CNF employees met on a monthly basis to discuss the challenges, opportunities, and potential actions under theme. Participation on these teams was voluntary but made available to all CNF employees. Twenty CNF employees representing a wide range of roles and specialties participated in one of the nine meetings help from November 2020 to March 2021.

Partner Sensing

The CNF sought to engage with our partners and gain outside perspectives. In total 11 responses were gathered from nearly 20 individuals between December 2020 and February 2021.

The purpose of sensing was to understand what makes the Coronado unique; the existing conditions, trends, and stressors that might impact social, economic, and ecological sustainability; and to surface the good ideas that will contribute toward the Sustainable Recreation Strategy update. Sensing is a participatory research approach that gives voice to the public and shows that the Forest Service cares enough to meet with individuals and listen to their ideas and concerns.

Leadership and FLT Review

The Action Plan was distributed for staff and leadership review in March 2021 and approved without modification on March 18, 2021 by the Forest Leadership Team.





Coronado National Forest Sustainable Recreation Action Plan—2021 to 2025

A full, detailed version is available upon request.

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