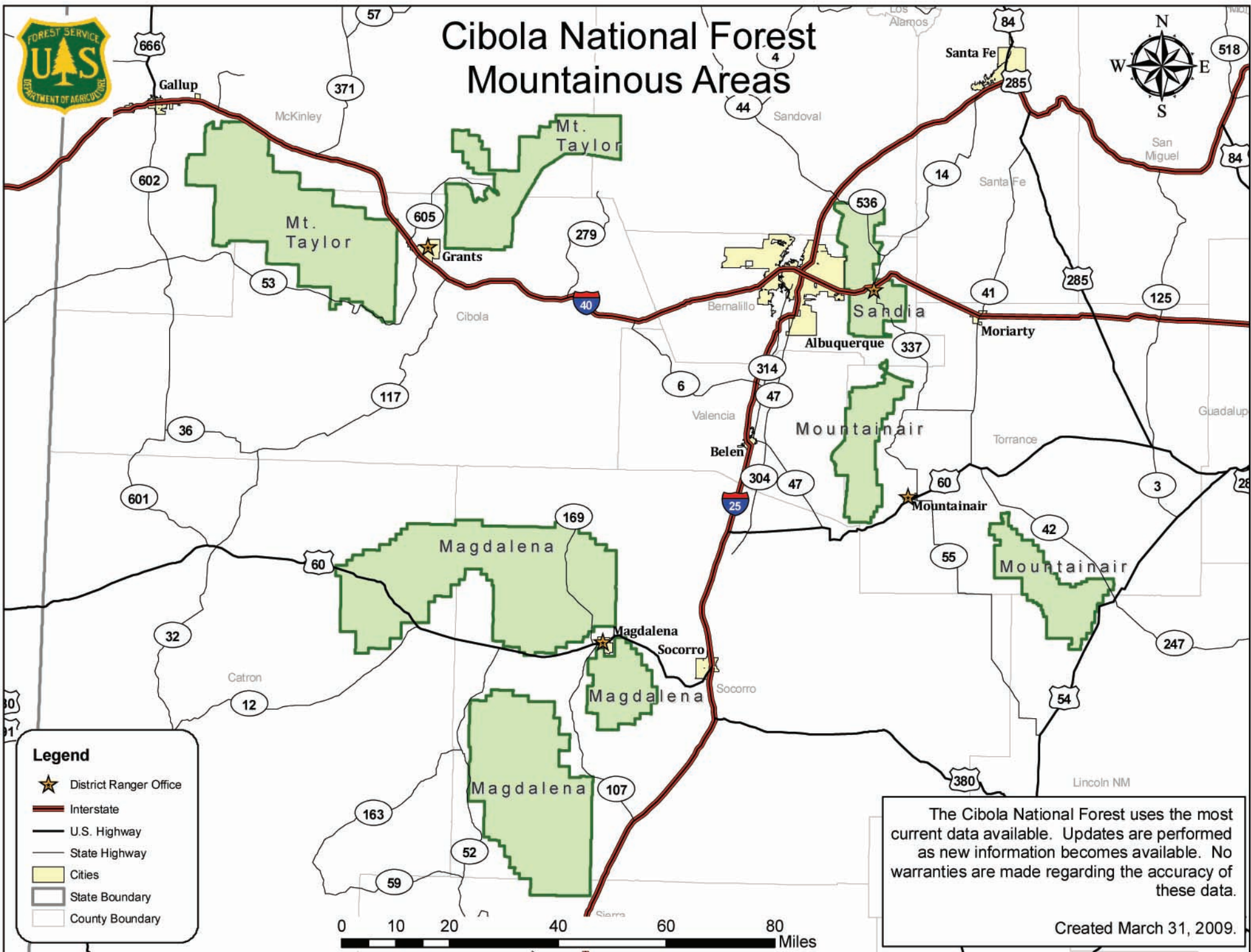




# Cibola National Forest Mountainous Areas



**Legend**

- ★ District Ranger Office
- Interstate
- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- Cities
- ▭ State Boundary
- ▭ County Boundary



The Cibola National Forest uses the most current data available. Updates are performed as new information becomes available. No warranties are made regarding the accuracy of these data.

Created March 31, 2009.



## Cibola National Forest – Mountain Ranger Districts Forest Plan Revision

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### Forest Overview:

- Four “sky island” mountainous ranger districts, widely separated, totaling approximately 1.64 million acres
- Ranger districts span 10 New Mexico counties
- Seventeen American Indian tribes reside in plan area vicinity; one with 12 chapters
- Eleven land grant communities reside in plan area vicinity
- Nearly 900,000 people reside in urban interface with two districts. The other two districts are rural and remote
- Approximately 1.3 million recreation site visits per year
- Four wilderness areas
- Dominant vegetation types are mainly piñon-juniper, ponderosa pine, dry mixed conifer, some spruce-fir, and aspen
- About 1,200 acres thinned annually over previous 3 years
- Only 3 perennial streams occur on the Forest
- Eleven federally-recognized plant and animal species occur on the Forest
- Eighty-four grazing allotments, 128 permittees on the Forest
- Two uranium mining proposals and EIS studies
- Three districts have completed travel management decisions, one ongoing (Magdalena)
- Many recent and ongoing collaborations and public involvement related to project activities on the Forest have resulted in a good relationship with most stakeholder groups, which forest plan revision efforts can build upon



## **Update on Early Adopter Forest Plan Revision:**

- Public kickoff announced in late October 2012. Kickoff began after completing Grasslands Plan for 4 national grasslands under the 1982 Planning Rule without appeal (December 2012)
- Planning core team consist of 4 resource specialists, mostly dedicated to forest plan revision
- The Forest has a collaboration coordinator/facilitator under contract
- Close collaboration with USFS Region 3 ecological and socioeconomic specialists. Three workshops held to date on data compilation and analyses for the assessment report
- Draft communication plan and collaborative framework plan completed
- To date, 6 public meetings, 2 county commission briefings, and numerous presentations at local organization and state agency meetings have been held, announcing initiation of assessment phase
- The Forest uses a variety of tools to notify the public of events. They include: regular mail and e-mail broadcast mailings, press releases, web postings on the Cibola NF site, flyers posted in local communities, radio and TV interviews, and Twitter. A mailing database in excess of 1,500 individuals, organizations, agencies, groups, and institutions is being maintained.
- Anticipated release of assessment report for public review is late spring or summer of 2013



## Successes, Challenges and Committee Considerations

### Directives:

- **Success:** The Cibola is moving ahead on assessment work based on the past work the Forest has done in the Cibola Grasslands and the drafts of Chapters 10 and 40.
- **Challenges:** The lack of having the complete set of directives, makes it difficult to do assessment or evaluation work for some topics. For example, not having Chapters 70 and 80 for wilderness and wild and scenic rivers has been of concern for groups like The Wilderness Society regional office; Sierra Club state chapter; and others who have been asking questions. A complete set of directives will be more critical as we get to Plan development.
- **FACA Committee Considerations:** There will be a transition period for the Forest between now and when final directives are issued. This transition period should be recognized and the early adopter Forests should be urged to move forward using the 2012 Rule requirements with the proposed directives prior to their finalization.

### Incomplete Information:

- **Challenge:** The Forest has determined there are approximately 300 species of invertebrates that could occur on the mountains. We are scrutinizing what data exists, but there are huge data gaps and uncertainty. In addition, the available data is not easily found or well-organized and is often difficult to interpret. This makes it difficult to do risk assessment. We will have to acknowledge this data gap in the assessment report, and this deficiency may have consequences throughout the revision process and beyond.
- **FACA Committee Considerations:** Help ensure the Directives provide guidance on how to move ahead when there are data gaps for the many species without extensive data.



## **Public Participation:**

### ○ **Challenges:**

- Public collaboration is very time and personnel intensive, albeit necessary and fruitful. There is a wide variance in perspectives, both internally and externally, of how much collaboration effort in forest plan revision is sufficient. Special interest groups can and often do request considerable time of the planning core team because they have the resources to stay engaged. On the flip side, many citizens in and around the Cibola NF only want to be engaged in forest plan revision when there is something to react or respond to, e.g., a draft document.
  - Competing for our stakeholders' attention to plan revision is challenging, as we are competing for their attention with our own Forest projects and those projects/issues of other local, state, and federal agencies. The risk of oversaturating our public with requests for attendance at public meetings, workshops, workgroups, etc. is real.
  - The Cibola NF publics are geographically widely-spaced, and in many cases do not have established interactions between stakeholder groups that are widely separated. This makes achieving broad scale collaboration more difficult.
- **FACA Committee Considerations:** Recognize that the collaboration environment and capacity for each Forest is different and help ensure the directives guidance provides discretion on how to approach collaboration.

## **Use of New Communications Technology:**

- **Challenge:** There are many new and innovative technologies that can assist in public participation efforts. However, the Forest does not have the capacity to fully utilize these technologies. For example, we lack the capacity to develop webinars or live blogs that would be compliant with the American Disabilities Act requirements.
- **FACA Committee Considerations:** Help ensure that the directives do not require technologies that are beyond the capacity of Forests to implement them.



## Cibola National Forest – Mountain Ranger Districts Forest Plan Revision

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### **Innovations:**

- Custom MS Access database was developed for species-at-risk screening to identify species potentially occurring on the Forest. It will allow us to evaluate level of risk under current and future management (potential SCC).
- Unique team collaboration between Regional Office specialists and Forest and District specialists to assess and evaluate current and future trends for ecological and socioeconomic resource topic areas.
- Web postings that include a roadmap graphic, frequently asked questions, a forest plan revision glossary, and a summary of linked data sources being used in the Cibola assessment.
- A concerted effort to make the Cibola planning staff available for presentations on forest plan revision at meetings hosted by other groups, organizations, local governments, tribes, and other agencies.