



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Red Rock
Ranger District

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Dear Public:

The Forest Service has begun a planning process for the Fossil Creek area intended to result in amendments to the Tonto and Coconino National Forest Plans. New standards and guidelines, and new management areas would offer more effective resource protection and improved recreation quality for this unique area. (Refer to map and attachment.) Your comments and ideas are critical to this effort. Please comment by mail or fax: attention Judy Adams, Red Rock Ranger District, PO 300, Sedona, AZ 86339, or e-mail to jadams05@fs.fed.us. Comments are most helpful if received by November 30, 2002. For more information, join us at a public open house in Pine, Arizona on December 4, 2002 at the Pine Community Center, located on Randall Place (just off State Route 87 behind the Pine-Strawberry Museum) from 6:30 pm to 8:30pm. Additional open houses may occur in other areas if there is interest by the public. Please let us know if you would be interested in an additional open house in the near future.

There are many reasons to initiate management changes for the Fossil Creek area including the need for more durable protection for the outstanding and unusual riparian values of Fossil Creek, the increasing public demand for high quality water based recreation, and the expected decommissioning of the Arizona Public Service's (APS) Childs/Irving power plants.

Fossil Creek is one of few perennial streams in Arizona, which flows from the springs northwest of Strawberry south to the Verde River. The landscape is rich in unique resources, including native fish, travertine mineral deposits, cultural resources, Wilderness, diverse riparian plants and crystal clear spring waters. With the restoration of full flows to Fossil Creek, travertine mineral deposits will likely recreate a unique system of clear, blue pools and waterfalls. This travertine forming mineral deposition only occurs in one other location in Arizona, making this an unusual and important resource.

An interdisciplinary team has begun an analysis and planning process to help determine how the Fossil Creek area should be managed in the future. Management changes would address the changed conditions triggered by the restoration of full flows into Fossil Creek. It assumes that the Childs/Irving Hydroelectric Facility will no longer be operating and full flows of 43 cubic feet/second (CFS) will be restored to the entire length of Fossil Creek, making this stream corridor of even greater public interest. (Currently about 38 to 41 CFS is diverted to the flume and power plants for power generation).



Recent Forest Service inventories of conditions along Fossil Creek show high recreation pressures affecting streamside soils, plants, and archaeological remains. An important purpose of management changes is to restore and better protect these sensitive and unique areas, while continuing to offer outdoor recreation opportunities.

We will also evaluate the eligibility of Fossil Creek for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Eligibility is an inventory to determine whether a river is free flowing and possesses one or more outstandingly remarkable value(s).

The following document is organized to present (1) management ideas; (2) a list of other on-going planning processes for the Fossil Creek area; and (3) a summary of resource conditions for the area.

If you do not have comments at this time and wish to receive future information about this planning process, please contact us. If we do not hear from you, we will remove you from this mailing list. Thank you.

Sincerely,

/S/ KEN ANDERSON

KEN ANDERSON
Red Rock District Ranger
Coconino National Forest

/S/ ED ARMENTA

ED ARMENTA
Payson District Ranger
Tonto National Forest