

**DECISION NOTICE  
AND  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)  
ARIZONA TRAIL  
Sandy Seep to Kelly Tank  
(Peaks Segment)**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND  
FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT #18**

**Coconino National Forest  
USDA Forest Service  
Coconino County, Arizona**

**DECISION**

It is my decision to designate and construct the Arizona Trail, Sandy Seep to Kelly Tank (Peaks Segment). This is the last remaining section of the Arizona Trail on the Coconino National Forest to be designated and constructed. The Arizona Trail is a long-distance non-motorized trail that will traverse Arizona from the Mexico to the Utah borders. This particular segment of the Arizona Trail follows the west side of the San Francisco Mountain and extends from Sandy Seep to the Kelly Tank.

The Arizona Trail Association (ATA) is a membership organization, seeking active supporters of the Trail, coordinating volunteers, and providing other essential services to the Arizona Trail project. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ATA and Arizona State Parks Board, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and Pima County was entered into in October, 1995. The MOU established a framework upon which the various agencies and the ATA may cooperatively plan for the development, operation, and maintenance of the Trail.

As a result of the decision to designate and construct the Arizona Trail it is necessary to amend the Coconino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (FLMP). We have added management direction to the plan on page 52 that incorporates the Peaks District portion of the Arizona Trail as a special designation along with the existing Mogollon Rim and Mormon Lake Ranger Districts' designations.

A portion of this trail corridor goes through the Fort Valley Experimental Forest and therefore requires the signature of the Director for the Rocky Mountain Research Station in Fort Collins Colorado or their designated representative.

**ALTERNATIVE C1 – SELECTED ALTERNATIVE**

Below is a brief description of Alternative C1. Additional details are located in the Environmental Assessment (EA).

This decision identifies a corridor that is one-quarter mile wide. The proposed Arizona Trail route would be a 24-inch tread located within the corridor based on the on-the-ground layout. The primary season of use of the proposed Arizona Trail route would be mid-May through mid-October. The route may also be signed as a cross-country ski trail.

Traveling from east to west, the trail would begin at Sandy Seep and travel along existing Forest Service trails to the Sunset Trailhead. An alternate route from Buffalo Park uses the existing Lower Oldham, Rocky Ridge and Schultz Creek trails to connect with the route. This alternative places the Arizona Trail on Schultz Creek Trail and removes motorized use on Schultz Creek Trail. This alternative creates a new non-motorized section of trail in the Fort Valley area. It then travels north between Hart Prairie and the Kachina Peaks Wilderness to Kelly Tank. Alternative C1 includes the additional trailhead at the parking area of the Arizona Snowbowl and a connector trail of 0.4 miles that includes a short interpretive trail loop at the trailhead. Other trailheads to be used include existing trailheads at Buffalo Park, Sunset, and Sandy Seep and a not yet constructed trailhead at Kelly Tank.

Alternative C1 includes adjusting the trail route for edge habitat (moving in and out of edge with on the ground layout) and creating the Bismarck Loop connecting the Little Springs area to the Arizona Trail and naturalizing existing social trails. The Arizona Trail is located east of Little Springs and close to the Kachina Peaks Wilderness boundary to create more distance between Little Springs and the Arizona Trail. The new Bismarck Loop location better manages high levels of use by people in sensitive Mexican spotted owl (MSO) habitat.

This decision includes all the design features listed in Chapter 2, page 6 and 7, of the EA. This includes cultural site coordination, best management practices to protect soil and water resources, timing restrictions for Mexican spotted owls, vegetative screening for wildlife and private homeowners, self closing gates, establishing no camping areas in Mexican spotted owl protected activity centers (PACs), social trail obliteration in the Little Springs area, trail width parameters, sensitive plant species survey and avoidance, steps to control spread of nonnative and invasive weeds, identification and approval by Rocky Mountain Research Station of a route that avoids affects to research plots within Fort Valley Experimental Forest and posting interpretive signs as mitigation near research plots prior to construction. This decision encourages the use of volunteer trail stewards to assist with patrol, invasive plant control, maintenance, and to provide information on leave no trace and stay on trail recreation use ethics.

This decision includes the implementation of the terms and conditions as described in the Biological Opinion (BO) from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The BO states, “The Forest Service shall not issue permits for groups larger than 12 persons, which is recommended by the Recovery Plan, during MSO breeding season (March 1 – August 31) for use of the segment of the Arizona Trail within the Schultz Creek, Weatherford, and Little Springs PACs”.

The BO was received from the US Fish and Wildlife Service on November 12, 2003. The Opinion states, “We anticipate the take of MSO will be difficult to detect because finding a dead or impaired specimen is unlikely. However the level of incidental take can be anticipated by chronic disturbance that will affect reproductive success and survival of MSO within the project area. We anticipate harm and harassment to MSO resulting from the cumulative effects of past and on-going recreation in these PACs coupled with the proposed action. This will result in continued disturbance, which may result in disrupted MSO reproduction and the ability of these

PACs to contribute to recovery of the species.” The US Fish and Wildlife Service biological opinion determined the construction and use of the Arizona Trail – Peaks Segment will not likely jeopardize the continued existence of the MSO.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the Forest Service determination of No Effect to the bald eagle and black-footed ferret.

## **RATIONALE FOR CHOOSING ALTERNATIVE C1**

The advantages of Alternative C1 are that it would provide safe and high quality recreation opportunities. The trail is nonmotorized, in keeping with the vision of the Arizona Trail statewide to provide for hiking, equestrian and mountain biking opportunities. The trail route is scenic, with long distance vistas, a variety of high elevation plant communities (aspen, limberpine and mountain meadows) and up-close views of Agassiz and Humphrey’s Peaks. Alternative C represents a balance of providing this high elevation experience while being sensitive to wildlife, cultural and wilderness values<sup>1</sup>.

The Humphreys Trailhead link will allow Arizona Trail hikers the choice of taking the Humphreys Trail to reach the highest point in Arizona. At the same time, the trail link and interpretive loop trail give a well-designed place to go for the thousands of people that visit the trailhead parking lot each year. Without a designed trail linkage, social trails would continue to be created in this area. The majority of visitors will travel the first mile or two of the trail beyond the trailhead/parking lot which has been our experience on the nearby Kachina Trail. Alternative C1 also provides an opportunity to re-locate high use social trails in the Little Springs area.

As an Arizona Trail hiker or rider travels along Alternative C, they will experience long, contiguous, and unbroken stretches of single track trail, seldom crossing social trails or roads. After social trail obliteration work is complete the evidence of these trails will quickly become substantially unnoticeable to the passing hiker. The hiker will be able to enjoy a quality of experience with noticeable opportunities for feelings of solitude and remoteness, and a lack of human disturbance for long periods of time.

While hiking or riding alternative D, the users’ experience will often be fragmented as the trail crosses roads – both open and closed. The trail itself will often follow old road corridors that will take decades to heal to a narrow single-track experience. In other words, the evidence of human disturbance will be substantially noticeable for decades after the designation of the trail. Along this route the numerous crossings of roads and proximity to major forest road networks will reduce the likelihood of an Arizona Trail user from experiencing feelings of solitude and remoteness.

I carefully considered the tradeoffs within each of the Mexican spotted owl Protected Activity Centers (PACs). Alternative C1 passes through or alongside four of the five Mexican spotted owl PACs analyzed. In the Schultz Creek PAC and the Weatherford PAC the Arizona Trail is

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<sup>1</sup> Cultural sensitivity, wilderness designation that excludes mountain bike use and wildlife habitat concerns have caused us to limit designating trails within the adjacent Kachina Peaks Wilderness.

located on an existing Forest Service trail. These trails already see high levels of recreation use and the Arizona Trail designation will elevate use trends somewhat. The existing trail is located on the outer edge of the Schultz Creek PAC and adjacent to the Schultz Pass Road. Alternative C1 provides an opportunity to remove motorized trail use (motorcycles) on the Schultz Creek Trail. The Weatherford PAC has been occupied 15 of 17 years (but is not documented to be breeding) with the current levels of recreation activity. In the Snowbowl PAC (located south of the Snowbowl permit area) there are no existing Forest Service System trails and very little social trail use. The new Arizona Trail would add to recreation activity in this PAC. However, the Veit Springs Trail owned and administered by the Arizona Game and Fish Department receives high levels of nonmotorized recreation and the paved Snowbowl Road crosses the PAC. Monitoring has shown that owls continue to occupy and breed successfully within the PAC under these existing uses. The Alternative C1 trail is located away from known nest locations within all the PACs. In the Little Spring PAC there are two well-established social trails causing resource damage. Alternative C1 provides an excellent opportunity to lessen impacts within this PAC by the designation of the Bismarck Loop (designed in coordination with US Fish and Wildlife Service). Designated and managed Forest Service system trails with proper signing, maintenance and trail stewards will maintain this popular site and improve owl habitat. In all the MSO PACs, camping restrictions are part of the trail implementation to reduce nighttime disturbance. The Biological Opinion will be followed to limit group sizes permitted along the trail within PACs during the MSO breeding season. Alternative C1 provides high quality high elevation recreation opportunities for the public in a managed setting that maintains Mexican spotted owl habitat.

The cost of Alternative C1 is slightly higher than to Alternatives A and A1 and similar to Alternative D.

The preferred alternative passes near private property in the Hart Prairie area and I know that some owners have concerns. They have expressed concerns with an increase in vandalism, burglary and other crimes due to the construction of the trail. Our analysis does not lead us to that conclusion based on trail studies conducted by Colorado State Parks, University of Nebraska, and the National Park Service. It is anticipated that nearby homes may hear the occasional dog barking or person talking but these are expected to be minimal. A variety of uses currently occur in the vicinity of private land including scenic driving, firewood gathering, camping, hunting, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, snowmobiling, hiking cross country and hiking on social trails. Currently people knock on homeowner's doors for emergency type situations and this is not expected to greatly increase as a result of the trail construction and designation. Signing, educational brochures, and trail stewards can help alleviate potential for future emergency situations. Actual layout will be done to achieve the best vegetation screening available. Numerous studies nationwide have consistently shown that greenways and trails have a positive effect upon property values.

Some commenters felt that it was inappropriate to place a trail on the slopes of the San Francisco Mountain prior to a landscape scale assessment for the greater area. Although a landscape scale assessment is a valuable tool there is enough information available to make a choice regarding this trail. The Forest Plan was developed as a landscape plan and provides direction specifically for the San Francisco Mountain such as guidelines for managing the wilderness, mixed conifer, mountain meadows, and aspen forests. The trail is passing through areas currently roaded or with closed roads and fits descriptions of general dispersed recreation opportunities in the Forest

Plan. The trail allows people to experience the mountain while maintaining the less fragmented landscapes upslope in the Wilderness. In addition, by keeping the trail out of the Wilderness we are more in concert with tribal cultural values and mitigate the need for a second trail outside of the wilderness that would accommodate mountain bikes.

I understand some people were concerned about deer, elk, and turkey habitat. This decision does not change the existing motorized closure in the Bismarck Lake area. There may be a slight increase in human disturbance to these species in the immediate vicinity of the Alternative C1 route that will affect deer fawning, elk calving and turkey nesting habitat. However, population viability of these herds/flocks has not been determined to be a concern.

I understand some people were concerned about fragmenting habitats and landscapes with this decision. There are several miles of existing designated Forest Service trails in the Dry Lake Hills and Fort Valley area. On the west side of the San Francisco Mountain there are no existing designated Forest Service trails to the west of the wilderness. However, there is general dispersed recreation occurring on the open Forest Road system, pockets of user-created trails and areas where closed roads are now used as social trails. As the San Francisco Mountain and its slopes become more popular for recreation, there will be more and more ‘unplanned’ trails and areas of resource impact. Impacts would be confined to one hardened or defined trail tread and closure and restoration of social trails would mitigate current resource damage. A designated trail corridor on the west and southern slopes of the mountain provides planned, well-engineered sustainable trail opportunities that limit resource impacts.

There is no doubt this will be a popular trail used by many people. The design features and mitigation measures will ensure that environmental effects from increased levels of use are not significant. The existing condition (no-action) also presents deleterious effects as described in the EA. People will continue to use this area either in the present unmanaged setting or with a managed trail corridor. The managed trail corridor provides greater opportunity for maintaining the qualities of the area in a safe, environmentally sensitive way.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN DETAIL AND ADDITIONAL RATIONALE**

Three trail route and trailhead alternatives were considered and analyzed in detail in the Environmental Assessment.

Alternative A was the proposed action in the Scoping Document. Alternative A is the same as C except in the Fort Valley area. In Alternative A, 4.4 miles of trail would have motorcycle use. The advantage of Alternative A was that the existing Fort Valley trail system could be used for the 4.4 miles of trail and reduces the amount of new construction. My primary concern with Alternative A is one of safety and I believe additional trail construction in this high recreational use area is appropriate to provide opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized users. I understand some motorized users will be displeased that I am designating Schultz Creek Trail as non-motorized. The Fort Valley Ecosystem Restoration decision was designed to account for this need and multipurpose trails will be constructed prior to changing the Schultz Creek designation. The cost of this alternative is slightly lower than C1 and D. Effects to MSO habitat are similar to Alternative C1.

Alternative D has the same location as Alternative A in the Dry Lake Hills and Fort Valley area and is located further west for the stretch of trail between Fort Valley and Kelly Tank. Alternative D is located west of private lands of Hart Prairie and east of Highway 180. Alternative D does not implement the Bismarck Loop at Little Springs or the Humphreys Trailhead link because this location would be too far away from those areas to create the trail linkages. Alternative D avoids two of the three northern goshawk post-fledging family areas (PFAs), all MSO PACs north of Schultz Creek, and follows roads slated for closure as much as possible. The advantage of Alternative D is that the trail only passes through one Mexican spotted owl PAC and one northern goshawk PFA. The disadvantage is that this alternative crosses several motorized roads and does not provide as many vistas and the diversity of high elevation scenery as Alternatives A and C1. My concerns about managing existing use in the vicinity of the Alternatives C route were a factor as well. Current social trail use in this area is causing resource damage from erosion, multiple trailing, and potential adverse impacts to wildlife. These impacts can be mitigated with the designation of Alternative C. The cost of this alternative is slightly higher than A and C1.

Alternative B is the no-action alternative. Under Alternative B a trail route would not be designated and constructed in this area at this time. The advantage of Alternative B is that this “no-action” alternative would not increase use along existing Forest Service trails and would not construct new trails in PACs. There is no cost associated with No Action. However, the disadvantages are that it will not provide needed trail for recreation demands and will leave a gap in the Statewide Arizona Trail. Social trail use will continue under all alternatives. However, in the action alternatives, where the Arizona trail route is constructed connecting social trails would be obliterated. In the Little Springs area, existing high use social trails would continue to occur in sensitive wildlife habitat locations.

## **OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

Four alternatives were considered but not analyzed in detail.

Placing the Arizona Trail on the east side of the mountain, and using existing trails, was not analyzed in detail because it would require traversing the Kachina Peaks Wilderness and subsequently require an additional route outside of the wilderness for mountain bikes. In addition there are threatened and endangered wildlife concerns occur on the east side of the mountain like the west side and the east side contains many more culturally sensitive areas.

An alternative to use the Kachina Trail was not analyzed in detail because mountain bikes are prohibited within congressionally designated wildernesses and portions of the Kachina Trail are not suited to horses.

An alternative to use the existing Brookbank Trail was not analyzed in detail because it passed through a Mexican spotted owl nest buffer and did not meet the goal of maintaining a ½-mile distance from known spotted owl nest locations.

Lastly, an alternative that would avoid constructing new trail in PACs, use existing roads and trails and still provide for a recreation experience that would meet the Arizona Trail Association objectives was explored. This alternative was not analyzed in detail as ground verification of the

route indicated this was not possible due to the arrangement of private lands, the Fern Mountain Botanical Area and the location of existing roads and trails.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND SCOPING**

This project has been listed in the Coconino *Schedule of Proposed Actions* (SOPA) since October 2001. Consultation and public involvement on the Arizona Trail, Sandy Seep to Kelly Tank, was sought in 2001. A Proposed Action was mailed to a mailing list that included individuals, organizations and a variety of State and local agencies. Field visits were conducted with representatives from Arizona Game and Fish Department, US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Hopi Tribe, Grand Canyon Trust, Arizona Trail Association in addition to field trips provided for interested homeowners and public. The Environmental Assessment was mailed to 145 individuals, groups, and agencies. Notice of the formal comment period on the Environmental Assessment was published in the *Arizona Daily Sun*, on August 8, 2003 (per 36 CFR 215, June 4, 2003).

All comments received during the analysis were considered in this decision.

Many comments were received in response to the Proposed Action and significant issues were identified that led to alternatives.

Comments received during the EA comment period largely reflected concerns previously expressed and did not change the preferred alternative. Project Record #78 displays comments received during the EA comment period. The discussions above reflect many of the concerns raised and my rationale for this decision related to those topics.

## **FUTURE NEPA ACTIONS**

The Environmental Assessment will guide any subsequent project implementation related to trail management and the actions described in Alternative C1 for the Arizona Trail. Future site-specific project proposals will be tiered to this Environmental Assessment (40 CFR 1508.28). Tiering means that, if needed, future environmental documents for projects based on this document will summarize or incorporate by reference the issues discussed in this analysis. Environmental documents for those projects will focus on site-specific issues unique to the proposed project.

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**

**Context.** This project is a site-specific action that by itself does not have international, national, region-wide, or statewide importance. The discussion of the significance criteria that follows applies to the intended action and is within the context of local importance in the area associated with the Arizona Trail, Sandy Seep to Kelly Tank (Peaks Segment).

**Intensity.** The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations (40 CFR 1508.27).

1. The analysis considered both beneficial and adverse effects. As described in the rationale section above, impacts from this project are both beneficial and adverse. The adverse effects of constructing the trail are minor in nature and will not impair land productivity. The long-term effects are considered to be beneficial to recreation opportunity and managing recreation use to a single trail alignment in a manner that maintains resource values. The EA contains a complete discussion of the effects in *Chapter 3*.

2. There are no known adverse impacts to public safety. The intended action will benefit public health and safety by removing motorized use from the Schultz Creek Trail. This will reduce potential safety concerns involving motorized and nonmotorized users. As stated in the *Items Common to All Action Alternatives* section in *Chapter 2* of the EA, standard Forest Service requirements will be used for trail construction.

3. No unique characteristics of the geography, such as cultural resources and wetlands, will be adversely affected. All but approximately 1-mile of the Peaks Segment of the Arizona Trail lies within the San Francisco Peaks Traditional Cultural Property (TCP). This TCP was determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the White Vulcan Mine Settlement Agreement and Mine Closure in August 2000. The San Francisco Mountain is associated with cultural practices and beliefs of living Native American communities that are rooted in their history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of their community. As part consultation for this project, approximately 109 contacts were made with tribes who hold the Peaks in particular reverence. The preferred alternative mitigates all tribal concerns and the Arizona SHPO concurs with the Coconino National Forest that this project has no adverse effect to the San Francisco Peaks TCP or to any other cultural resources. The Arizona Trail is not located near any, parklands, prime farmlands, or ecologically critical areas. There is a low level of cultural and historical sites in the trail area and these will be avoided by ground disturbing activities. *Chapter 1* of the EA describes the location and existing conditions of the Arizona Trail.

4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. The effects of the project are limited to the Arizona Trail. While some people have disagreed with Arizona Trail construction, no person has provided evidence that the environmental effects of the project have been wrongly predicted; therefore the effects are not likely to be controversial. *Project Record #78* shows comments received to the EA.

5. The degree of possible effects on the human environment are not highly uncertain, nor are there unique or unknown risks involved. The environmental effects are typical trail construction and use on the Coconino National Forest. Effects are discussed in *Chapter 3* of the EA.

6. Site specific actions found as part of this decision do not set a precedent for future actions, which may have significant effects, nor does this represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. A decision to construct this portion of the Arizona Trail does not establish any future precedent for other actions that may have a significant effect. Future actions will be evaluated through the NEPA process and will stand on their own as to the environmental effects and project feasibility.

7. These actions are not related to other actions that, when combined, will have significant impacts. Cumulative effects are documented in *Chapter 3* of the EA. There is no off-site soil

erosion, impacts to the overall watershed or changes to forest vegetation that would be cumulative to impacts from other activities. There are no effects to air quality and therefore no cumulative effect. There are no adverse effects to cultural resources and therefore no cumulative effect. The Arizona trail increases recreation trail use in the area and this increase is additive to current recreation use trends. The effects of more use are offset by management activities such as signing, camping closures, group size limits and other design features described in Chapter 2 of the EA. Effects to wildlife habitat are described in detail in Chapter 3 of the EA and are generally minor and do not cause significant effects when considered with other activities in the general area. The biological evaluation describes activities within each MSO PAC and discusses cumulative effects.

8. This decision will not contribute to the loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources. All but approximately 1-mile of the Peaks Segment of the Arizona Trail lies within the National Register eligible San Francisco Peaks Traditional Cultural Property (TCP). The San Francisco Peaks are associated with cultural practices and beliefs of living Native American communities that are rooted in their history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of their community. As part consultation for this project, approximately 109 contacts were made with tribes who hold the Peaks in particular reverence. The preferred alternative mitigates all tribal concerns and the Arizona SHPO concurs with the Coconino National Forest that this project has no adverse effect to the San Francisco Peaks TCP nor to any other cultural resources.

9. The US Fish & Wildlife Service has completed a Biological Opinion supporting that this decision may affect, likely to adversely affect, the Mexican spotted owl. Possible effects of the trail to Federally listed wildlife species were analyzed in the Forest Service’s Biological Assessment and Evaluation. The US Fish and Wildlife Service’s Biological Opinion states that the project will not likely result in jeopardy to the MSO. The Forest Service will implement the “reasonable and prudent measures” and “terms and conditions” as described in the Biological Opinion. These include minimizing direct and indirect affects. Therefore, no significant effects to threatened or endangered species of plants or animals or habitat critical for the management of these species, are anticipated. A summary of effects is located in *Chapter 3* of the EA. The no action Alternative (B) contains deleterious trends associated with existing recreational uses; the consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s determination acknowledges these ongoing effects and provides for managed recreation in PACs.

10. This decision does not violate or threaten to violate Federal, State, or local laws, or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. The local city and county governments were contacted. Coconino County trails coordinator supports the project.

I find that implementing Alternative C1 does not constitute a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment in either context or intensity. I have made this determination after considering both positive and negative effects, as well as direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of this action and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

I have found that the context of the environmental impacts of this decision is limited to the local area and is not significant. I have also determined that the severity of these impacts is not significant.

## **OTHER FINDINGS**

This decision meets the intent of and complies with the Coconino National Forest Land Management Plan. The Decision includes an amendment to the Forest Plan to designate the Peaks Ranger District Segment of the Arizona Trail. This amendment is a nonsignificant Forest Plan Amendment (36CFR219.10) and is within the Forest Supervisor's authority to approve (FSM 1921.04, Exhibit 01, Region 3 Supplement 9/25/1998). This project is limited in its physical scope and does not significantly alter the long-term relationship between levels of multiple-use goods and services projected within the Forest Plan.

The Decision complies with relevant laws for the protection of the environment.

Biological Evaluations and consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service is complete. Cultural Resources Clearance and consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer is complete. The Decision also complies with Arizona State laws regarding natural resource protection, including but not limited to water quality, as well as county and city resource protection measures.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION**

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15<sup>th</sup> business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

## **DECISION SUBJECT TO APPEAL**

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR 215 (June 4, 2003) and 251 (251 for permittee's only). The appeal must be filed (regular mail, fax, email, hand-delivery or express delivery) with the Appeal Deciding Officer. Written comments must be submitted to Appeal Deciding Official: USDA Forest Service, Regional Office R3, 333 Broadway Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87103. Fax number is (505) 842-3110. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as email message, plain text (txt), rich text format (.rtf), and Word (.doc) to [appeals-southwestern-regional-office@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-southwestern-regional-office@fs.fed.us). Only those who submit timely and substantive comments during the notice and official comment period on the EA will be accepted appellants. To be eligible for appeal, each individual or representative from each organization submitting substantive comments must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request. All commenter should review the 36 CFR 215.6 regulations for detail on comment requirements.

Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of this notice in the *Arizona Daily Sun*, the newspaper of record. The publication date in the *Arizona Daily Sun*, newspaper of record, is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by another source.

Arizona Trail – Peaks Segment – Decision Notice

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity provider and employer. For further information, contact Gene Waldrip or Cary Thompson at Peaks Ranger District, 5075 N Hwy 89, Flagstaff, AZ 86004, or phone 928.526.0866, or email [clthompson@fs.fed.us](mailto:clthompson@fs.fed.us).

/s/ Nora B. Rasure

January 14, 2004

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Nora B. Rasure  
Forest Supervisor  
Coconino National Forest

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Date

/s/ Daniel G. Neary

January 14, 2004

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Daniel G. Neary  
Project Leader  
Rocky Mountain Research Station

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Date