



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Santa Fe National Forest

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File Code: 1950-2/2350-4

Date: July 31, 2003

Dear Interested Party:

On July 31, 2003, Gilbert Zepeda, Forest Supervisor, signed the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (DN/FONSI) approving a non-significant amendment to the Santa Fe National Forest Plan that incorporates the Management Plan for the Congressionally designated Pecos Wild and Scenic River, located on the Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District of the Santa Fe National Forest.

The DN/FONSI, Environmental Assessment, and Management Plan for the *Pecos Wild and Scenic River Forest Plan Amendment and Management Plan* are available on the Santa Fe National Forest website at www.fs.fed.us/r3/sfe. Copies of these documents may be obtained on request from the Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District, PO Drawer 429, Pecos, NM 87552 (phone 505-757-6121).

The Environmental Assessment was sent out for public review on April 23, 2003 and a Notice of Availability was published in the Albuquerque Journal on April 26, 2003. The review period ended on May 27, 2003 with a number of responses received. The Forest Service analyzed the comments and responded to substantive comments in the Public involvement section of the DN/FONSI. Some of the comments received resulted in the following minor changes to the standards and guidelines in the Final Management Plan.

- Revised the provision to allow floating use. The Standard now reads, “The use of non-motorized rafts, boats, or other conveyances to float down the river is permitted. No additional facilities (put-ins, parking areas) will be constructed to facilitate floating.”
- Revised the standard for State Highway 63, which now reads, “Recommend that the New Mexico State Highway & Transportation Department only upgrade State Highway 63 to a double-lane paved road, with a 22' maximum width, and alignment designed for 25 mph maximum speed (Guidelines for Geometric Design of Very Low Volume Roads, ASHTO, 2001--Rural Recreational and Scenic Roads)”.
- Reworded the standard on redesign of dispersed camping to read, “In the Recreational segment, work with NMG&F to redesign dispersed camping in riparian areas or re-direct use to upland sites or outside of the corridor. Re-vegetate closed sites.”
- Revised the standard pertaining to reintroduction of Rio Grand Cutthroat Trout to read, “In cooperation with NMG&F, work toward reintroduction of native fish while retaining recreational fishing opportunities.”



- Revised the wording on elk management in the Wild Segment. In the Wild segment, work with NMG&F to evaluate elk forage utilization. If over-utilization becomes apparent, assist in with efforts to correct the situation, such as through a redistribution of hunting pressure or a reduction in elk numbers on a localized basis.
- Inserted the word “permitted” into the standard to read, “In the Recreational segment, limit permitted horse grazing to the uplands above the Highway 63-fenceline.”

Other changes were made in the wording of the Management Plan to clarify intent. The changes made to the standards and guidelines are minor and within the scope of effects analyzed in the Environmental Assessment (EA). Therefore, the EA will not be reissued for public review.

The decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR Part 217. A written notice of appeal must be filed in duplicate with the Appeals Deciding Officer, USDA-Forest Service Southwestern Regional Office, 333 Broadway SE, Albuquerque, NM 87102, within 45 days of the date of publication of the legal notice in the Albuquerque Journal, and must meet content requirements specified in 36 CFR 217.9.

Sincerely,

/s/ Gilbert Zepeda

GILBERT ZEPEDA
Forest Supervisor