

Chapter 5: Consultation and Coordination



Blue Grama
Boutelous gracilis

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EFFORTS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Governmental agencies and the public have been invited to help during the scoping phase of this planning process to identify purpose, need, alternatives, and environmental issues. The scoping process began with a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement, which was published in the *Federal Register* on April 2, 2003. The monument then conducted four open houses to inform the public of the planning process and to invite comments on work to date. The open houses were held in June 2003 and November 2003. Each time, one open house was conducted in Los Alamos and a second in Santa Fe.

The first set of open houses in June 2003 presented the need for action, a summary of research results to date, and a summary of existing NPS and national monument policies regarding resource conservation, wilderness management, and other topics relevant to whether action should be undertaken. Comments from these sessions, as well as written comments received as a result of the *Federal Register* notice, were integrated into the scope of the planning effort to refine purpose, need, and objectives; to produce a range of reasonable alternatives; and to supplement the list of issues and impact topics. Written and oral comments were received at these open house sessions.

After the need for action, purpose, objectives and constraints were further refined based on the results of the first set of open houses, a second set was held in November 2003. These sessions presented very specific objectives for each vegetative community (see *Desired Future Conditions for Piñon- Juniper Woodland* [*Purpose of and Need for the Plan* section]) in this EIS, and a preliminary set of alternatives for review and comment. They also introduced the concept of adaptive management. Written and oral comments were received. Impact topics or issues and suggestions for new alternatives either resulted in additions or changes to the existing scope, or were considered and rejected for reasons described in , *Impact Topics Dismissed from Further Analysis* (see *Purpose of and Need for the Plan* section), or *Alternatives Dismissed from Further Analysis* (see *Alternatives* section).

Any substantive comments (e.g., those bearing on the analysis in this environmental impact statement) are summarized below.

Summary of Comments received during public scoping workshops:

- 11 comment documents were received; five from first scoping session and six from second.
- All commented on whether intervention was necessary to restore piñon- juniper in a designated wilderness; 91% supported intervention, 9% suggested that additional substantiation was needed to support the need for mechanical action in the face of the piñon die- off.

- Nearly three- quarters of the respondents directly addressed whether intervention in the wilderness was acceptable to achieve stated objectives. Of this group, 50% said it was acceptable or desirable to sacrifice wilderness values to return the wilderness to a more natural state or to slow erosion and save cultural resources. Thirty- seven percent indicated caution should be used or disturbance minimized. One of eight who commented on this issue, or 11%, indicated it was not acceptable to use mechanized means to treat wilderness (“Mechanical treatment will destroy wilderness character, and impacts will persist for many decades or even centuries.”) This person did not comment on the acceptability of treatment with hand tools.
- Of those who indicated a preference for one or another alternative, 72% (five of seven) indicated they preferred mechanized tools to accomplish the restoration more quickly; the other 28% said hand tools were preferable.
- Five of the commenters directly or indirectly addressed prescribed burning in the park. All indicated prescribed fire was desirable; two of these five asked that the park consider prescribed burning either instead of mechanical treatment (one) or in addition to mechanical treatment (one).

The remainder of the comments fall in the category of “miscellaneous.” They include comments on the planning process (e.g., The first scoping hearing was vague and had no alternatives; The park is correct in designing alternatives to meet the Desired Future Conditions, as DFCs should not change from alternative to alternative; The park should include a strong minimum requirement analysis as per DO 41; The plan should have a zoning map and identify the maximum use of motorized tools in each zone; The park should coordinate with USFS and LANL in this effort; How is this related to the wilderness EIS, etc.); money (e.g., Bandelier National Monument should have more money to educate, assess and mitigate impacts from erosion); and suggested alternatives beyond those presented (e.g., widespread reseedling; reestablish beaver; hand remove exotics; inject herbicides in junipers; allow bark beetles to kill off trees.).

PREPARERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Distribution List

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	US Department of the Interior
	US Fish & Wildlife Service, Eric Hein
	US Forest Service, Sandy Hurlocker, Espanola District Ranger

US Forest Service, Dolores Maese, Public Affairs Officer, SFNF

US Forest Service, Charles Jankiewicz, Ecosystem Specialist, SFNF

US Forest Service, John Peterson, Jemez District Ranger

US Forest Service, Joe Reddan, Peco District Ranger

US Forest Service, Los Alamos Office

US Forest Service, Mike Frazier, SFNF

US Forest Service, Martin Chavez, Forest Supervisor, SFNF

Valles Caldera National Preserve, Jeffery Cross, Executive Director

Western Network, Rosemary Romero

Wildlands Project, Robert E. Howard, President

* complete distribution list including names of individuals not affiliated with any organization is available upon request to Bandelier National Monument

Table 29 provides information on authors and contributors of this document.

Table 29. List of Preparers and Contributors.

Name	Title/Role	Education	Experience
NPS			
Darlene Koontz	Superintendent	B.S. Forestry	24 years NPS
John Mack	Chief, Resources Management. Responsible for ethnographics analysis.	B.S. Biology M.S. Fish and Wildlife Management	15 years NPS
Jennifer Carpenter	Park Planner Responsible for project management, public involvement, park team facilitation, document review, wildlife, special status species and park operations analysis.	B.S. Ecology M.S. Applied Ecology and Environmental Resources	3 years NPS 6 years private sector environmental consulting 1 year state wildlife agency
Brian Jacobs	Vegetation Specialist. Responsible for vegetation, soils and water resources impact analysis.	B.S. Systematic Botany M.S. Population Genetics	14 years NPS

Name	Title/Role	Education	Experience
Steve Fettig	Wildlife Biologist. Responsible for wildlife, special status species analysis.	B.A. Biology M.S. Wildlife Conservation	10+ years NPS
Craig Allen	Senior Research Scientist. Responsible for soils/erosion data.	Ph.D. Ecology	18 years NPS/USGS/NBS
Dave Rupert	Assistant Director Office of Indian Affairs and American Culture Intermountain Regional Office (NPS). Responsible for ethnographic resources analysis.	Ph.D. Anthropology	29 years experience in government sponsored anthropological research work.
Kay Beeley	Cartographic Technician. Responsible for document graphics.	B.S. Environmental Planning and Management	19 years NPS
Cynthia Herhahn	Archeologist. Responsible for cultural resource impact analysis.	M.S. Anthropology Ph.D. Anthropology	5 years NPS
Total Quality NEPA			
Heidi West	NEPA Specialist. Responsible for EIS team facilitation; wilderness, soundscape (in visitor experience) and health and safety impact analyses; and document review.	B.S. Biology M.A. Science Communication, M.S. Biology Ph.D. Environmental Science and Engineering	22 years in environmental planning (13 years involved with NPS NEPA planning).
Kathie Joyner	NEPA Analyst. Responsible for visitor experience impact analysis and	B.A. Education M.A. Anthropology/ Archeology	26 years in environmental planning (state and federal environmental

Name	Title/Role	Education	Experience
	document review.		policy acts) and environmental resource compliance requirements.
Thomas A. Carr	Economist Consultant	J.D. Ph.D. Economics	10 years legal and 15 years economics and academic.
URS			
Lisa Pine	Environmental Planner. Responsible for air quality impact analysis.	B.A. History M.A. Geography	7 years as environmental planner providing technical and management support on NEPA projects; 13 years in public involvement and meeting coordination/facilitation.
David Jones	Senior Environmental Planner. Responsible for visual resources impact analysis.	B.S. Landscape Horticulture 2 years of graduate study in environmental planning	15 years as an environmental planner providing task and project management on NEPA projects. Technical expertise includes land use, recreation, wilderness, and visual resources.
Patti Steinholtz	Senior Environmental Planner. Responsible for technical and management support.	B.A. Communications	5 years as environmental planner providing technical and management support on NEPA projects.

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Wavy Leaf Oak
Quercus undulata

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