



# Walnut Canyon Study Area Special Study

Issue 1

March 2010

Dear Friends, Neighbors, and Partners,

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the National Park Service (NPS) are jointly initiating a special study to explore management options for an area of land surrounding Walnut Canyon National Monument, primarily administered by the Coconino National Forest.

On March 30, 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (the Act) as passed by the United States Congress. The Act includes language directing the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special study on management options for an area within the Peaks and Mormon Lake ranger districts of Coconino National Forest (managed by the USFS) and surrounding Walnut Canyon National Monument (managed by the NPS) (see page 2). The study area (referred to as the Walnut Canyon Study Area) includes federal, state, and private land, and comprises approximately 30,000 acres, 10 miles south and east of Flagstaff, Arizona.

The Act directs that the study will focus specifically on the following topics:

- The suitability and feasibility of designating all or part of the study area as an addition to Walnut Canyon National Monument.
- Continued management of the study area by the USFS.
- Any other designation or management option that would provide for (1) protection of resources within the study area; and (2) continued access to, and use of, the study area by the public.

Over the next several months, the study team will be gathering resource data, ideas, and concerns from stakeholders regarding future management of this area. We urge you to take a few minutes to complete the enclosed comment form (or you can access the form online at <http://www.walnutcanyonstudy.org>). Your input will continue to play an important role in the direction of this special study and the future of the study area. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Earl Stewart, Forest Supervisor,  
Coconino National Forest



Diane Chung, Superintendent,  
Walnut Canyon National Monument



Mayor Sara Presler, City of Flagstaff



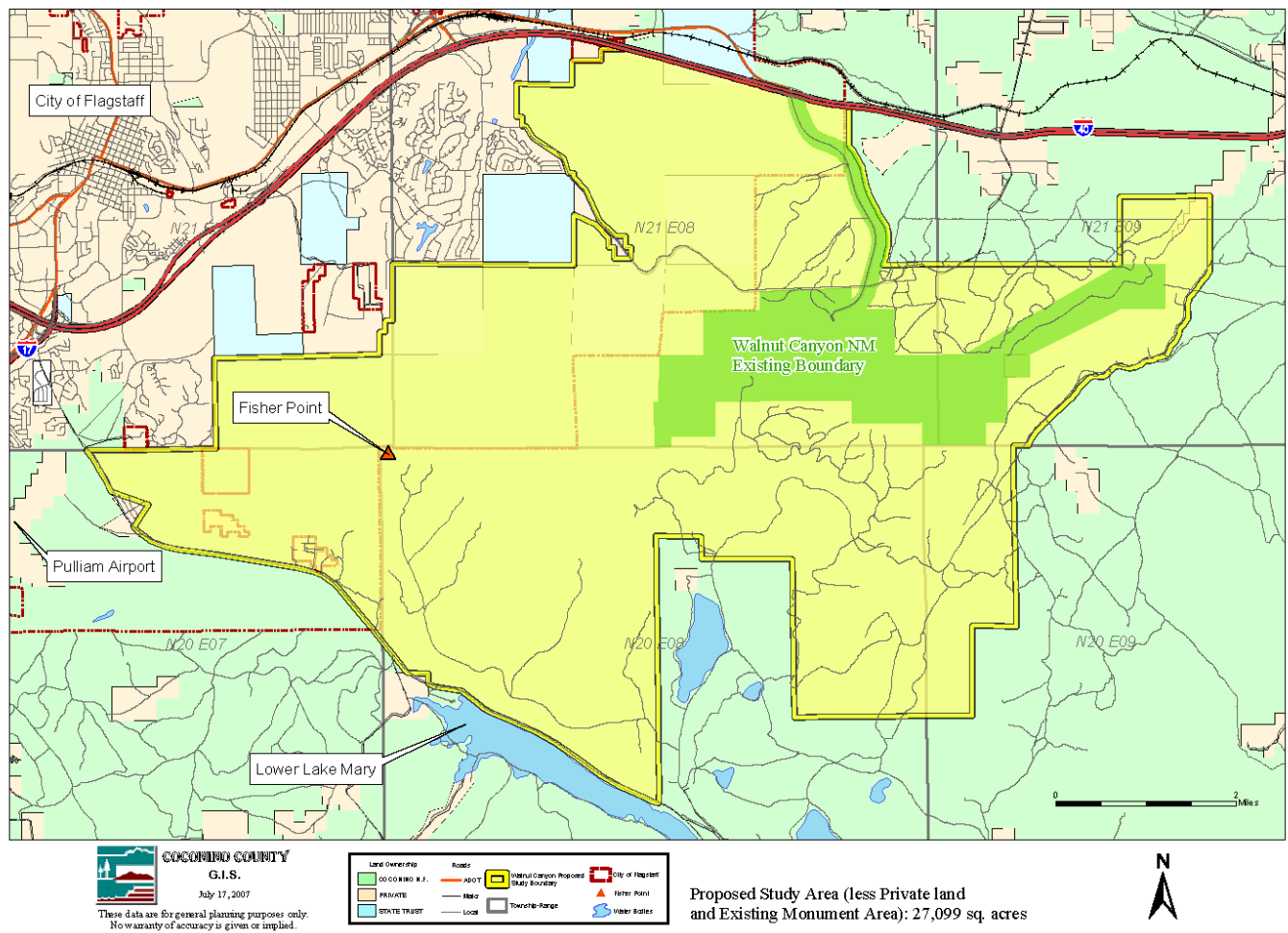
Liz Archuleta, Chairwoman of the  
Coconino County Board of Supervisors



Study Schedule	
Initial Public Input & Data Collection	Spring/Summer 2010
Analysis of Data	Summer/Fall 2010
Develop Preliminary Management Options & Assessment Criteria	Summer/Fall 2010
Draft Special Study	Winter 2010/2011
Finalize Special Study	Summer 2011

Web Site: <http://www.walnutcanyonstudy.org>

## Walnut Canyon Proposed Study Area - Exhibit B



[NOTE: The access road into the monument is national forest land and is included in the study area.]

## Current Uses In the Walnut Canyon Study Area

Recreational activities in the study area include camping, mountain biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, hunting, and hiking. Recreational facilities include the Canyon Vista campground (concessionaire operated); the Arizona Trail; several trails connecting to the Flagstaff Urban Trail System; approximately 32 miles of USFS managed hiking, biking, and equestrian trails; and an approximately 8-mile segment of the future Flagstaff Loop Trail planned for the study area.

Most of the USFS land within the study area is within grazing allotments.

Management projects by the USFS in recent years have included closing a large part of the area to firearms discharge, closing the Campbell Mesa area to motorized vehicles, and over 700 acres of forest thinning / fire fuels reduction projects. The study area includes water wells and water lines for the city of Flagstaff, as well as numerous stock tanks.

The area contains five Mexican Spotted Owl Protected Activity Centers and six northern goshawk post-fledgling areas. Additional species of note present in the study area include the golden eagle, peregrine falcon, deer, elk, pronghorn, mountain lion, and Flagstaff pennyroyal.

## What is the Walnut Canyon Study Area Special Study?

The Special Study will include:

- Examination of natural and cultural resources, current uses, and management actions and direction.
- Meaningful engagement with stakeholders, American Indian tribes, other agencies, and the general public to determine their desires for future management.
- Development and evaluation of the full range of management and designation options (as described on page 1).
- Analysis of any impacts of changing management or agency authority to natural resources, cultural resources, recreational opportunities, social values, and the local economy.
- Distribution of the results and findings of the Special Resource Study Report.

The City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, NPS, and USFS are full partners and participants throughout the study period. An independent third-party contractor will coordinate interagency efforts for the study.

### Major Steps of the Study Include:

- *Public Involvement and Consultations:* The public, stakeholders, tribes, organizations, and other agencies will be engaged throughout the study. A project Web site has been established and meetings will be held in the Flagstaff vicinity (see back page). A summary of public comments will be made available via the Web site at the conclusion of the commenting periods.
- *Data Collection and Analysis:* Data will be collected and will include natural and cultural resources, existing management and land use, recreational uses and trends, the surrounding social and economic environment, and regional and state plans and initiatives affecting the study area.
- *Development and Assessment of Management Options:* Based on data and public input, the study team will develop management options that would achieve desired goals and resource conditions.

Management options would then be assessed for the meeting of criteria and environmental effects.

- *Draft Study Document:* The study team will prepare a draft study document describing the management options and potential effects. A draft report will be prepared for public review.
- *Final Document:* Following review, a final study document will be prepared and submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior. The secretaries will transmit the results to Congress for a decision.

## Suitability and Feasibility Criteria for Expansion of a National Park Service Unit

One potential option is designation of all or part of the study area as an addition to Walnut Canyon National Monument. The NPS is responsible for screening proposals for new park units to assure that only the most outstanding resources are added to the national park system. A new national park area must meet criteria for national significance, suitability, and feasibility. Areas are usually added to the national park system by an act of Congress.

**National Significance:** To be considered nationally significant, a proposed unit meets all four standards:

1. It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.
2. It possesses exceptional value or quality illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.
3. It offers superlative opportunities for recreation for public use and enjoyment, or for scientific study.
4. It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of the resource.

**Suitability and Feasibility:** To be suitable, an area must represent a natural or cultural theme or type of recreational resource that is not already adequately represented in the national park system or is not comparably represented and protected by another land-managing entity. Feasibility factors include land ownership, acquisition costs, access, resource threats, and staff or development needs.



## **Participate in the Study!**

### **The first 60-day public outreach and comment period on the Walnut Canyon Study Area Special Study**

The first phase of this project is to gather resource data, ideas, and concerns from stakeholders and the public regarding future management of this area. We urge you to take a few minutes to complete the comment form (enclosed or online at Web site) and attend the public meetings. Your input will continue to play an important

role in the development of management options and the future of the study area. We look forward to hearing from you. Comments will be accepted through May 26, 2010.

Please attend an Open House and share your ideas, concerns, and comments.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Time</b>
April 19, 2010	Fire Station 21, Kachina Village	568 Kona Trail	4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
April 21, 2010	Flagstaff City Lobby	211 West Aspen Avenue	4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
April 22, 2010	Cromer Elementary School – Commons	7150 Silver Saddle Road	4:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Throughout the Special Study, information will be posted online (<http://www.walnutcanyonstudy.org>).

HDR / e<sup>2</sup>M

ATTN: Walnut Canyon Study Area Special Study

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