

Walnut Canyon Study Area Special Study

Welcome
Thank you for Joining Us



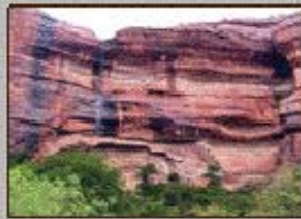
Why we are here

- ▣ On March 30, 2009, President Obama signed into law the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (the Act).
- ▣ This Act directed the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to conduct a special study on management options.
- ▣ The study area includes federal, state, and private land; approximately 30,000 acres.

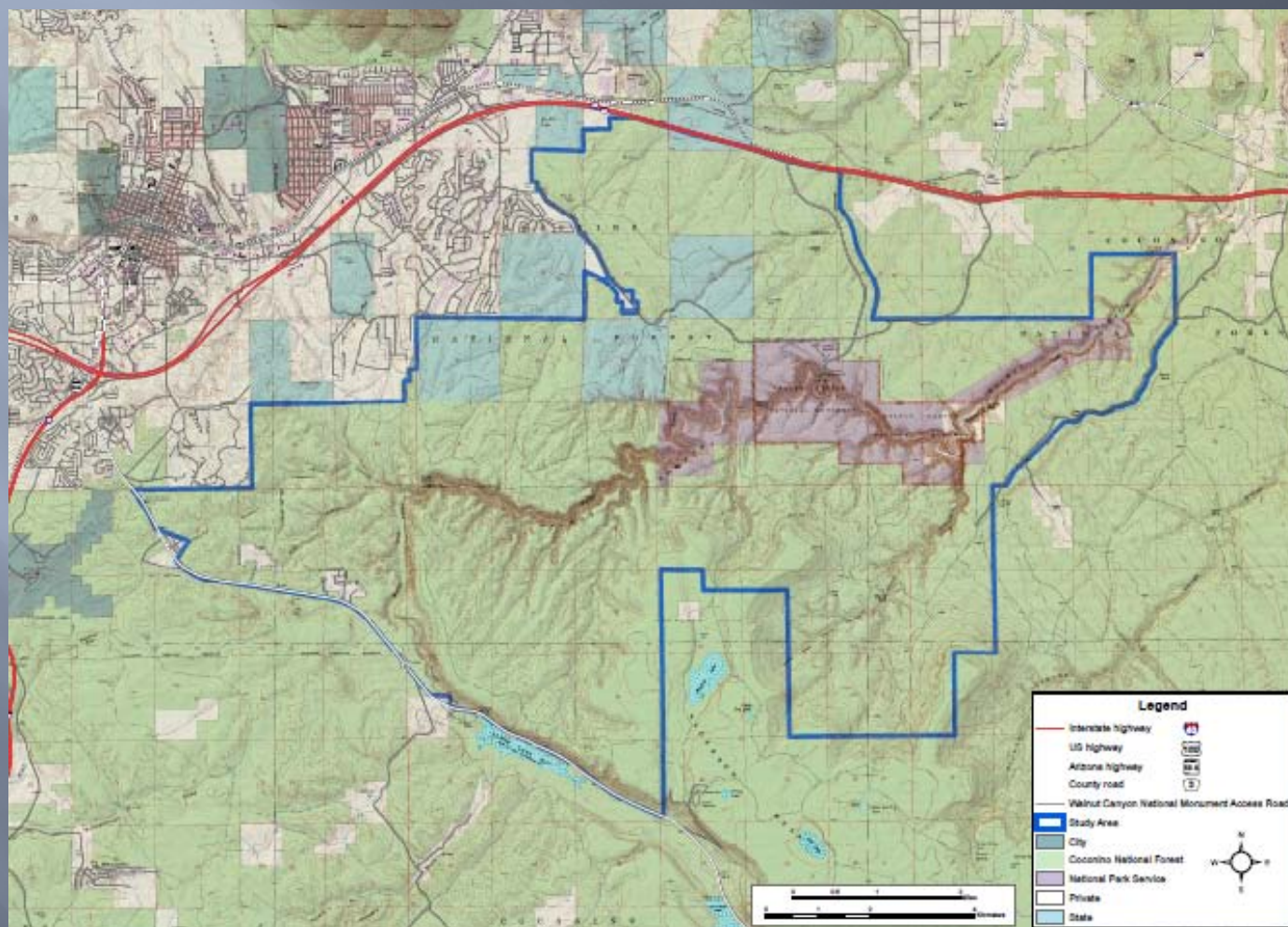


The Act directs that the study should assess:

- ▣ *The nationally significant natural, cultural, and recreational resources, 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 Forest Service; or*
- ▣ *Any other designation or management option that would provide for (i) protection of resources within the study area; and (ii) continued access to, and use of, the study area by the public.*



Walnut Canyon Study Area Special Study





Special Study Process

- ▣ *Joint development of a scope of work* for the contractor and process of the study by USFS, NPS, City and County government
- ▣ *Public Involvement and Consultations* - beginning of process, preliminary options, and draft report
- ▣ *Data Collection and Analysis* - Data collection near completion, analysis at draft report step
- ▣ *Development and Assessment of Management Options* - preliminary options complete
- ▣ *Further public comment* on management options
- ▣ *Draft Study Document* - next step after public review
- ▣ *Final Document*

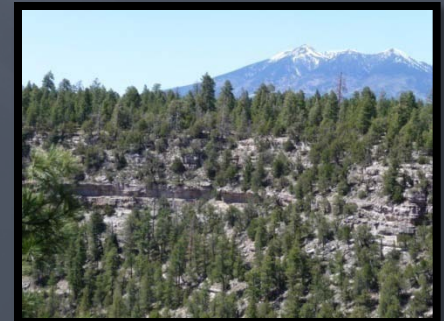
Management Options Workshop

March 24–25, 2011

- ▣ AZ State Forestry - Al Hendricks
- ▣ AZ State Trust - Ed Dietrich
- ▣ City of Flagstaff - Bob Caravona, Celia Barotz
- ▣ Coconino County - Liz Archuleta, Mandy Metzger, Steve Peru, Jeanne Trapiano
- ▣ Coconino NF - Mike Chaveas, Mike Elson, Kristin Bail
- ▣ NPS - Diane Chung, Lisa Leap, Skip Meehan, Kat Eisenman (recorder)
- ▣ AARCHER (facilitator) - Jayne Aaron, Ron Dutton

The workshop objectives were to:

- ▣ Establish common understanding of existing resources, uses, and management of study area
- ▣ Develop a list of management options for study area based on this understanding, public input, preliminary research on land designation options, and discussion between the agencies
- ▣ Discuss the merits and tradeoffs of each of the preliminary management options.





Questions discussed during workshop:

- ❑ At what level of government (local (City, County, USFS, or Congress) would future land management decisions be made?
- ❑ Protect resources from development - Does development include wind farms, utilities and infrastructure, residential and commercial development, recreational facilities, and/or commercial services?
- ❑ Are public concerns regarding current management by the USFS primarily about land exchanges or land disposal? Land could be exchanged to acquire lands within the study area boundary.

Questions (cont)



- ▣ What happens if the community wants development in the future for tax base, residential, infrastructure, or energy development?
- ▣ Maintain use and access of the study area - does this include all uses and access, and at current levels? Given the dynamic nature of land management, of recreation demands and levels of use, and the various factors that affect use and access, how would carrying capacity issues and user conflicts be addressed?

Questions (cont)

- ▣ Are the current study area boundaries appropriate? The Study Area currently includes the Flagstaff City Water Treatment Plant (special use permit), private inholdings, and State Trust Lands.
- ▣ Arizona State Trust Lands – held in trust for the beneficiaries. Different mission – to maximize returns for the beneficiaries. They do not have a conservation or recreation aspect to their mission. Some of the lands are valuable from a development perspective.

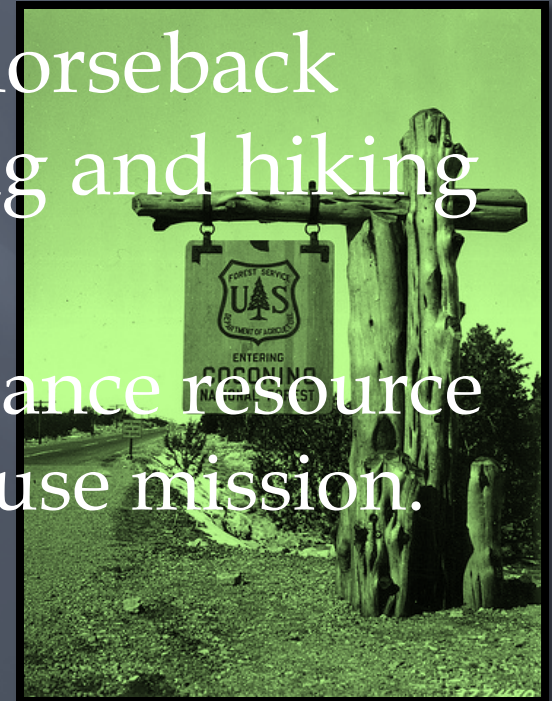
Preliminary Management Options for Federal Lands

- ▣ Continued Management Under USFS - Coconino National Forest
- ▣ Management Under National Park Service
- ▣ Special Management Designation
- ▣ Focused Congressional Legislation



1. Continued Management Under USFS – Coconino National Forest

- ▣ USFS currently manages the majority of the land within the Study Area boundary.
- ▣ Recreational activities include camping, mountain biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, hunting and hiking (and supporting facilities).
- ▣ Management is dynamic to balance resource protection with their multiple-use mission.



Continued Management Under USFS (cont.)

- ▣ Coconino National Forest Management Plan states for this Management Area (MA 37) that no land exchanges will occur unless the purpose is *to acquire land within* MA 37 through exchange of lands of national forest elsewhere.
- ▣ USFS may trade lands elsewhere to acquire inholdings within MA 37, but that no USFS lands located within the MA would be exchanged in order to acquire lands or resource interest outside of MA 37.
- ▣ This is the strongest management policy that can be made at the local USFS level.

Continued Management Under USFS (cont.)

Under USFS management:

- ▣ Access is virtually anywhere along boundary, and at this time, free
- ▣ Supports multiple use
- ▣ Management plans and actions balance resource protections with use
- ▣ Land exchange is used as a tool for multiple purposes and the majority of the time it is used to acquire parcels of high value from a resource perspective and bring those into the National Forest System, or to make small logical boundary realignments. These are initiated at the local level and authority for exchanges lies with the Regional Forester
- ▣ Cannot trade for State Trust Lands
- ▣ USFS can accept donated land

2. Management Under National Park Service

- ▣ Areas considered for addition to the national park system must possess nationally significant natural, cultural, or recreational resources; be a suitable and feasible addition to the system; and require direct NPS management.
- ▣ The National Park Service has established criteria for national significance, suitability, feasibility, and management alternatives.

Management Under NPS (cont.)

- ▣ At this time, the National Park Service is completing resource surveys and their required analysis on national significance; therefore, the viability of these options has not been determined.

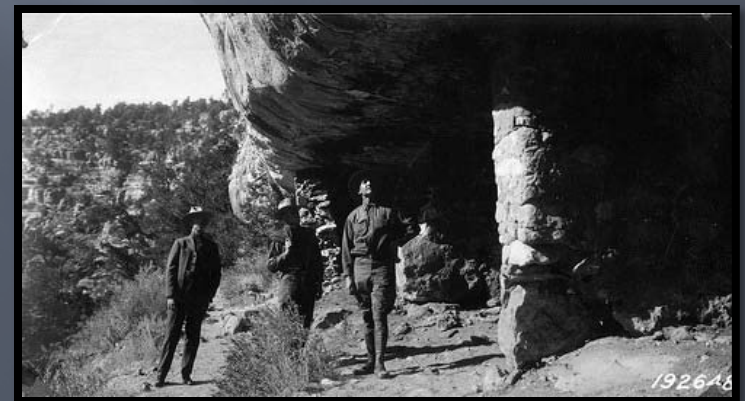


Management Under NPS (cont.)

2A. A New Unit of the National Park Service

National Park Service designations that may be appropriate:

- ▣ *National Park*
- ▣ *National Monument*
- ▣ *National Preserve*
- ▣ *National Recreation Area*



Management Under NPS (cont.)

2B. Boundary Adjustment to the Existing Walnut Canyon National Monument

- ▣ Made to an existing park unit - appropriate when the resources being considered are directly related to the purposes of an existing park system unit
- ▣ The National Park Service identifies and evaluates boundary adjustments that may be necessary or desirable for carrying out the purposes of the park system unit.

Management Under NPS (cont.)

All recommendations for boundary changes must meet the following two criteria:

- ▣ The added lands will be feasible to administer; costs; the views of and impacts on local communities and surrounding jurisdictions; and other factors (i.e., hazardous substances, nonnative species).
- ▣ Other alternatives for management and resource protection are not adequate.



Walnut Canyon National Monument

“The park purpose for Walnut Canyon is to protect ancient cliff dwellings and associated resources that are of great ethnographic, scientific, and educational interest and to properly care for and manage the cultural and natural resources of historic, social, and scientific interest within Walnut Canyon National Monument” (Walnut Canyon National Monument GMP 2007).



Management Under NPS (cont.)

Under NPS Management:

- ▣ The lands within the park system unit boundary are generally preserved for future generations.
- ▣ Land exchange would require an act of Congress.
- ▣ More access control (more limited access), as relative to current condition.
- ▣ Higher resource protection goals; therefore, could be more limits on use.
- ▣ Cannot accept land donation, unless the land is already within the congressionally established boundary of the park system unit.
- ▣ A boundary adjustment would likely include only a portion of the study area.

3. Special Management Designation

- ▣ Congress can designate Special Management (SM) Areas. Nearly 100 SM Areas have been established on federal lands.
- ▣ Legislation establishing each SM Area is unique, but the designations generally fall into the following categories: national monuments, game refuges, scenic areas, recreation areas, and other protected areas.
- ▣ The most likely special management designations for the lands considered in this Study Area are “National Conservation Area,” “National Scenic Area,” and “National Recreation Area.”

Special Management Designation (cont.)

SM Area designation could :

- ▣ Land acquisition/disposal/exchange - could raise this action to requiring an act of Congress if language is in enabling legislation. This could preclude land exchanges that are deemed necessary to meet local goals.
- ▣ Would not change status of State Trust Lands.
- ▣ The public can provide input into what the enabling legislation contains, but it is ultimately written by Congress.

4. Focused Congressional Legislation

- ▣ Congress could write legislation for focused specifications for land management, i.e., restriction on land disposal, although no examples for this scenario were discovered during research.

- ▣ Congressional legislation could:
 - Restrict Land Disposal - could raise this action to requiring an act of Congress if language is in legislation. This could preclude land exchanges that are deemed necessary to meet local goals.
 - Would not change status of State Trust Lands.
 - The public can provide input into what the legislative specifications contain, but it is ultimately written by Congress.

Options for Arizona State Trust Lands

The Arizona State Land Department is the Trustee for over 9 million acres of State Trust Land. It's mission is to manage those lands to maximize revenues for its 13 beneficiaries, a fact that distinguishes it from other public land such as parks or national forests. While public use of Trust land is not prohibited, it is regulated to ensure compensation to the beneficiaries for its use and protection.

Options for Arizona State Trust Lands

Arizona State Trust Lands within Study Area Boundary - Sections 22, 28, and a Portion of 10

- ▣ The Department cannot exchange lands, but it can, however, sell or lease lands at auction. The value of Trust land is established by appraisal and approved by the State Land Department Board of Appeals. The Land Department would work cooperatively with the federal government in its acquisition of State Trust Land, and an agreement reached on the appraised value.

Options for Arizona State Trust Lands (cont.)

Arizona State Trust Lands Adjacent to and Within the Study Area Boundary – Sections 20 and 30

- ▣ Sections 20 (adjacent to) and 30 (within) have high development potential due to their location and proximity to infrastructure. The AZ State Land Department as Trustee would consider allocating portions of these sections for a buffer along the eastern and southern boundaries within each section.

Options for Arizona State Trust Lands (cont.)

Arizona State Trust Lands Adjacent to and within the Study Area Boundary – Sections 20 and 30 (cont.)

- ▣ Sections 20 and 30 may be disposed of at the allowed density at the time of auction with a conservation easement as a requirement of sale. This would add value to each section and the adjoining land, and be consistent with the Trust's mission. The county and city are currently updating the regional plan and are looking at the State Trust Lands to meet their needs.

Next Steps

- ▣ Comments - through July 10, via Web site, mail in, or submitted tonight will be summarized in a report.
 - Management options – do they provide an adequate range and are they appropriate? Others?
 - What activities should be allow/ not allow in Study Area?
 - Why is there a need for change in management or land designation?
 - Are the boundaries appropriate for the management options?

Next Steps (cont.)

- ▣ Prepare Draft Special Study Report
- ▣ Special Study Report will include:
 - A description of feasible management options
 - Analysis of management options and their tradeoffs on resources, recreational opportunities, social values, and the local economy resources, social, and economic values
 - Public comment summaries



Thank you

Federal, County and City representatives are available for questions and discussion

