

Webinar: Engaging in NM's Forest Plan Revision Process



Agenda

- Overview of forest planning process
- Dive into the Carson, Santa Fe, and Cibola Forest Plans
- How to engage



National Forest Planning

Forest Service Requirements and Process

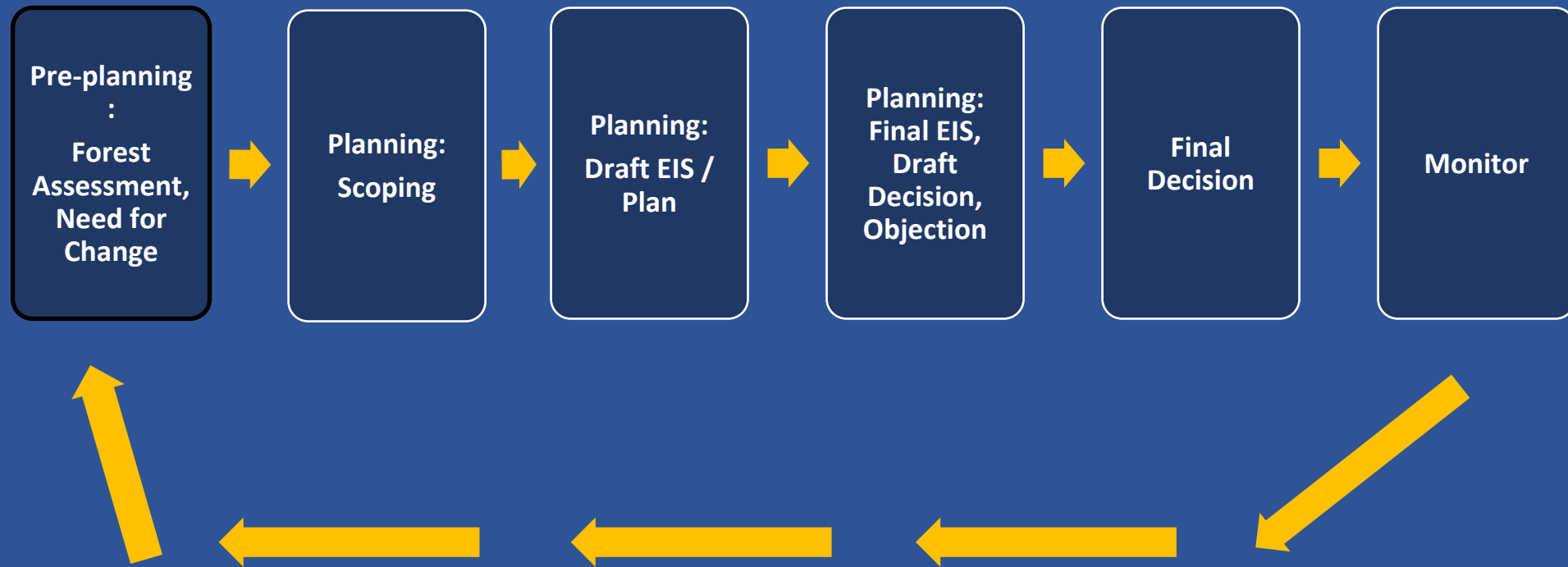


Forest Plans

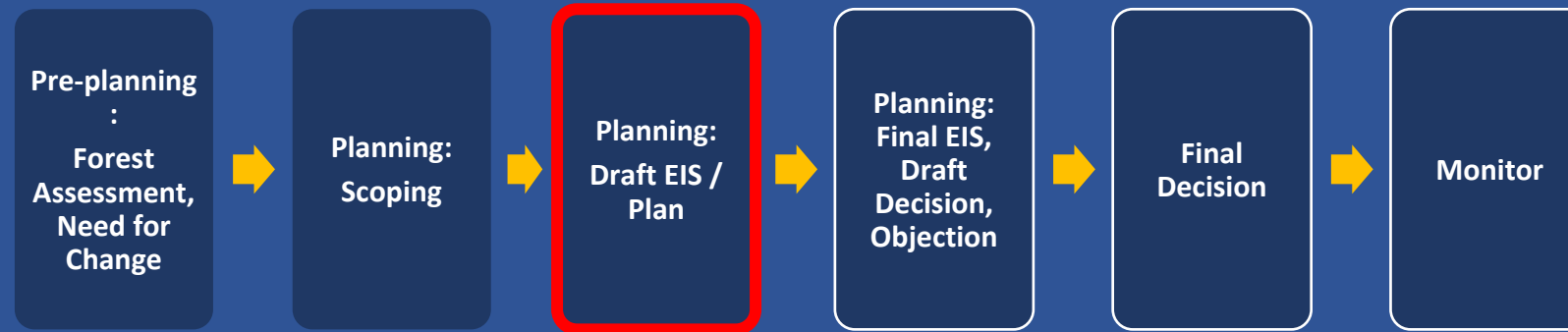
- 15-20 year master zoning plans
- Provides forest wide vision, direction, and strategy
- Divides the forest up into management areas/geographic areas
- Sets management direction for each area
- Establishes conservation areas –e.g. recommended wilderness areas
- Has to follow the framework set forth in the Forest Service's 2012 Planning Rule

For example...



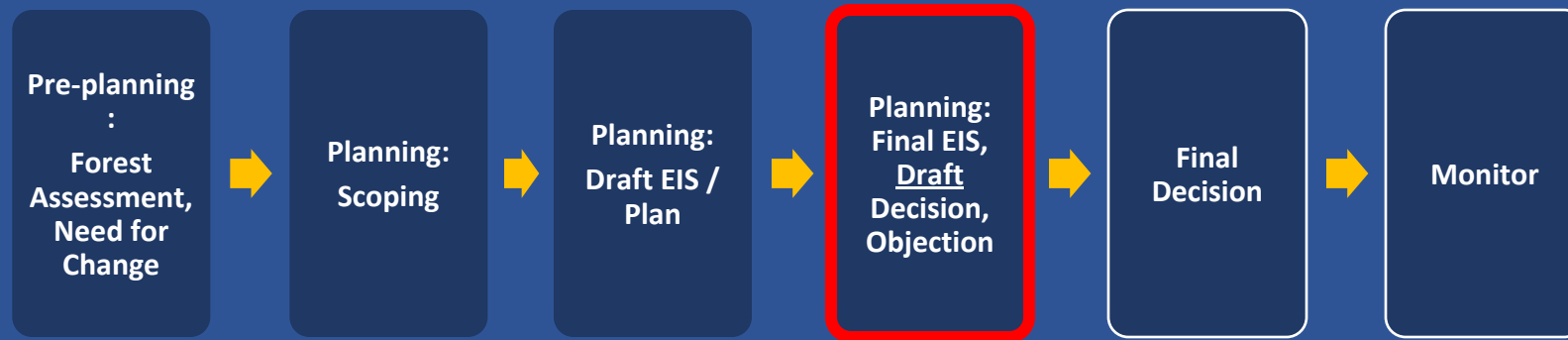


Draft Plan and Environmental Impact Statement



- Presents management alternatives
- Analyzes environmental impacts from each alternative
- 90 day public comment period; Forest Service must respond

Phase 2: Final EIS, Draft Decision, & Objection



- Forest Service selects the proposed management plan from the alternatives
- Public (if you submitted substantive comments) can file an objection
- Forest Service must respond to objections before issuing a final decision

Required elements

- Identify areas that qualify for wilderness designation and make recommendations
- Identify eligible wild and scenic river segments
- And others...



Recommended Wilderness



Photo credit: WCC



- FS conducts a wilderness evaluation process that culminates in a recommendation about additional wilderness.
- Forest Service cannot designate wilderness; only Congress can
- Forest Service must manage recommended wilderness areas to protect their wilderness character over the life of the plan

Eligible Wild & Scenic Rivers

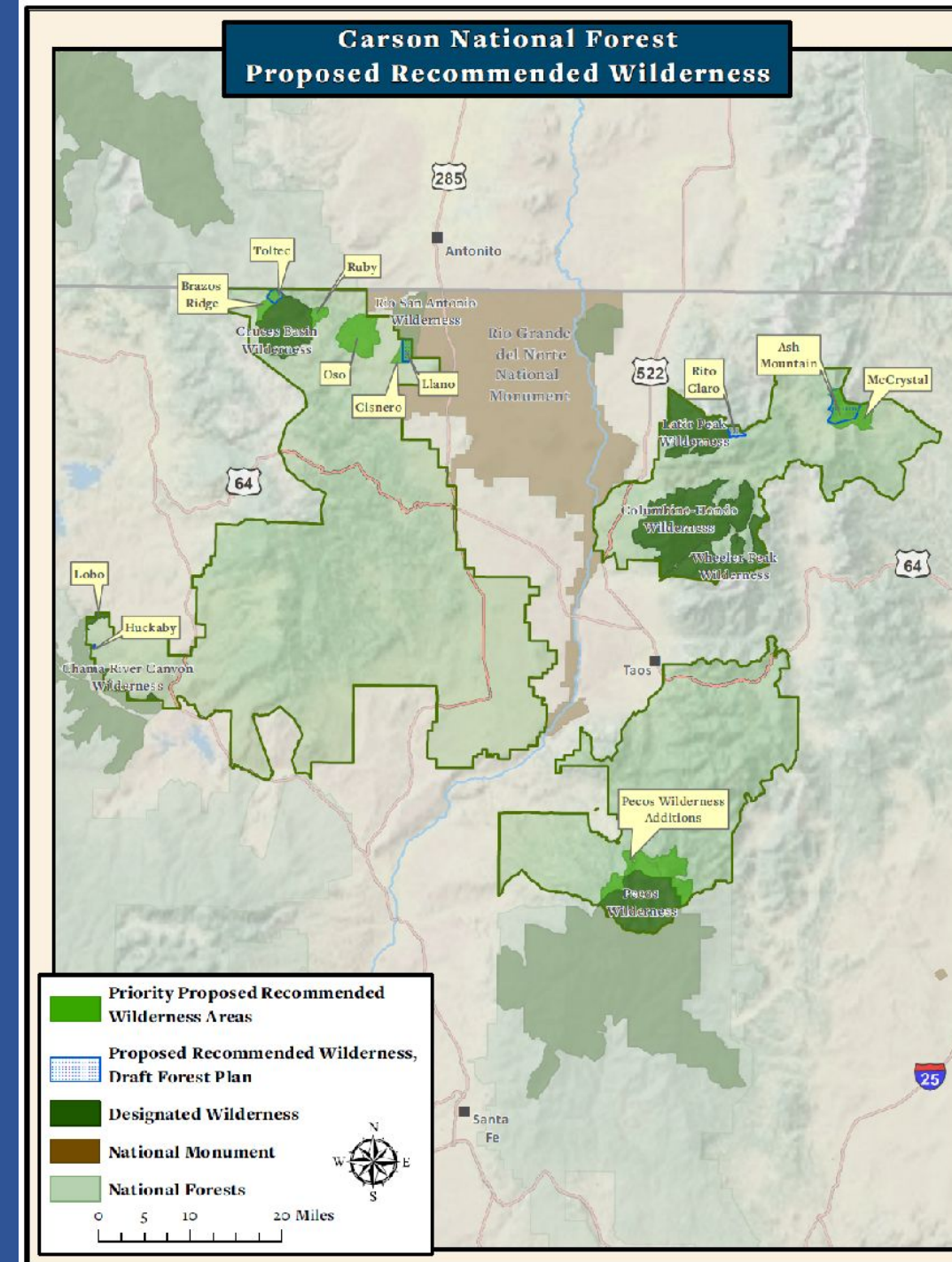
- Forest Service must inventory all rivers and streams to determine which qualify as “eligible” Wild & Scenic Rivers
- Forest Service must manage eligible rivers to protect their values
- Congress may eventually provide permanent protection by designating the rivers under the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act



Carson, Santa Fe, and Cibola Forest Plans

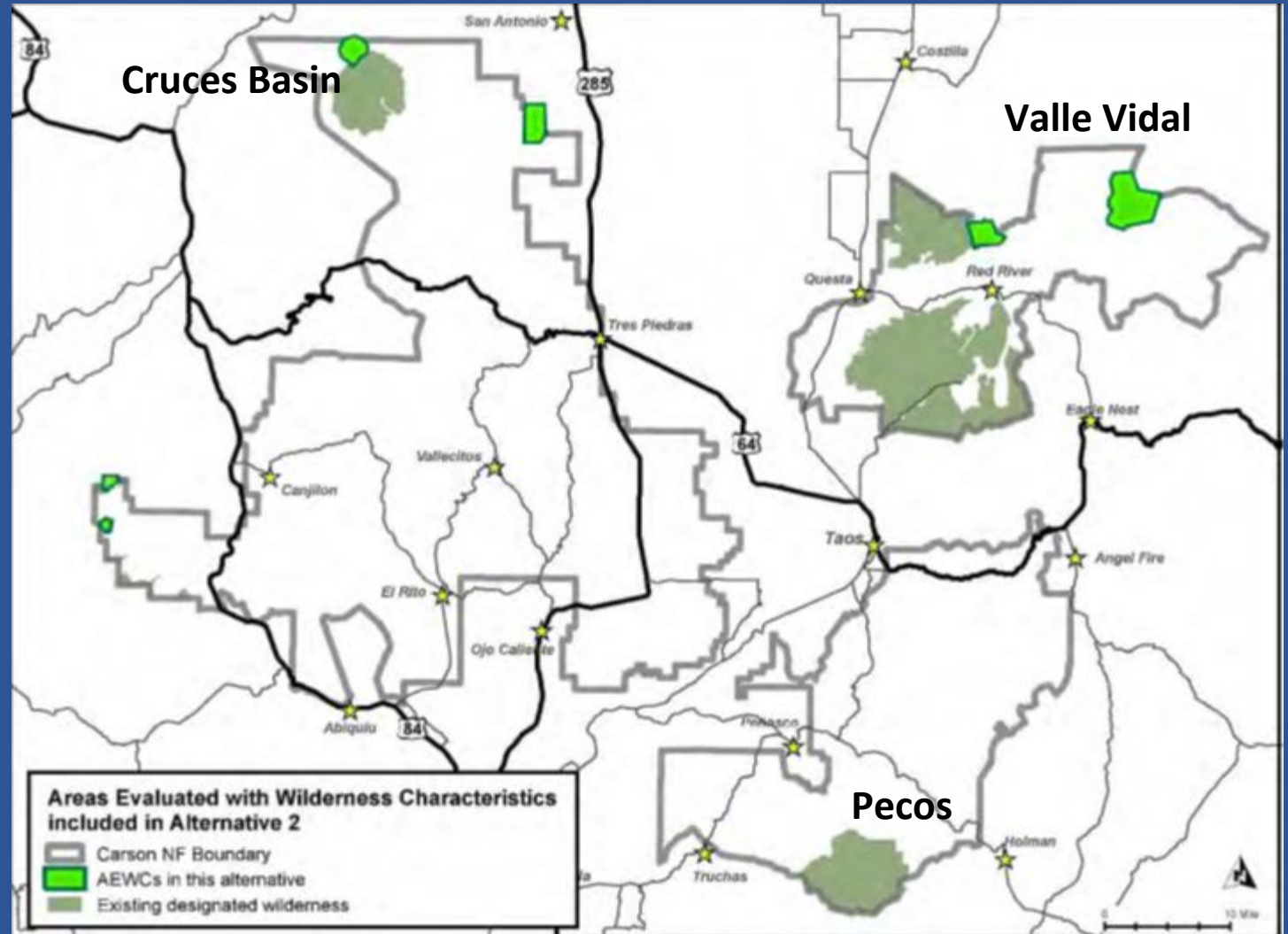
Carson National Forest

Alternative	Acres of Recommended Wilderness
Alternative 1 [no-action alternative]	0 acres
Alternative 2 [preferred alternative]	9,189 acres
Alternative 3	0 acres
Alternative 4	45,473 acres
Alternative 5	67,996 acres



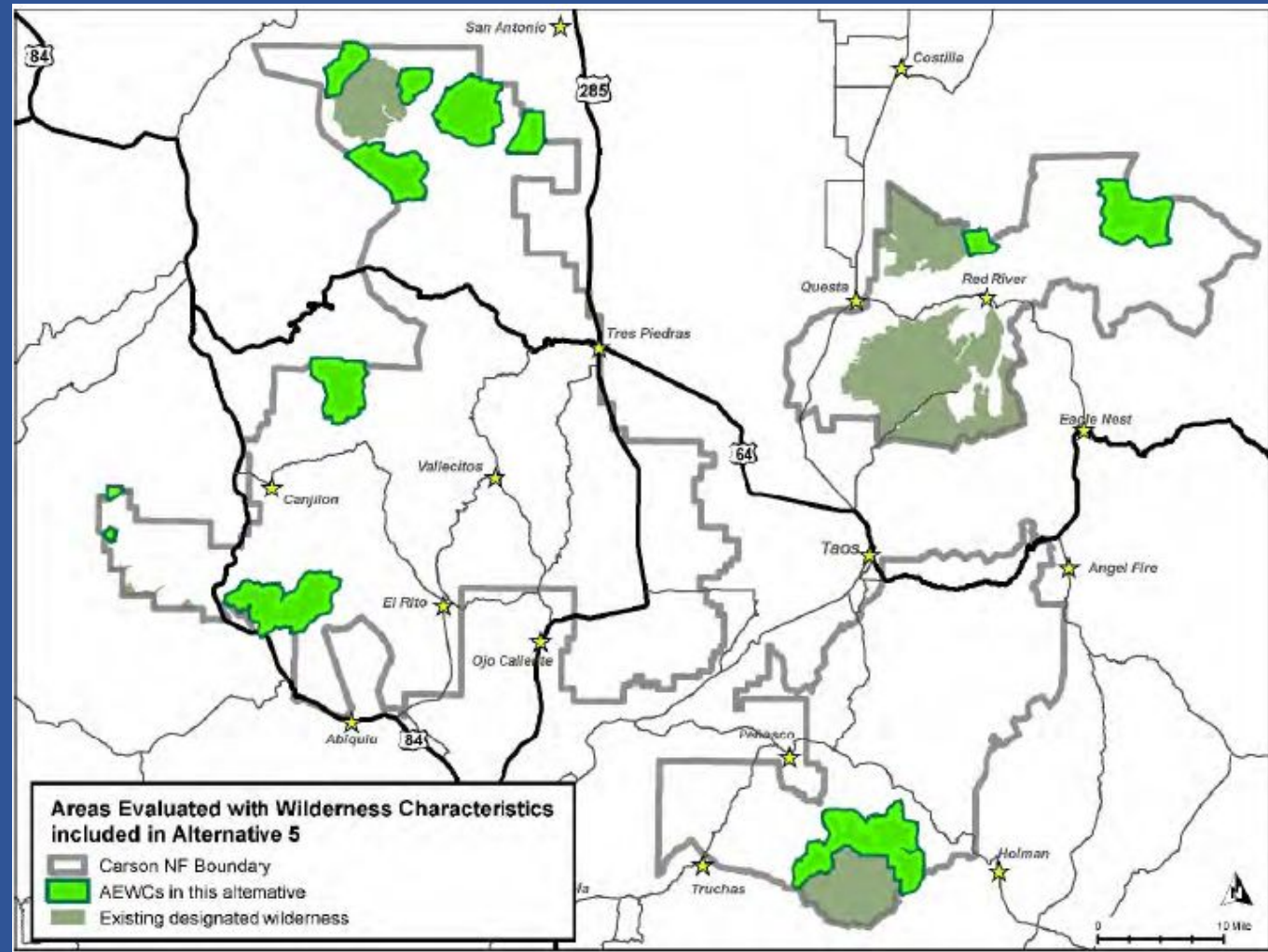
Alt. 2 (preferred)

- Overall 9,198 acres of recommended wilderness (.6 % of the forest)
- No additions to the Pecos Wilderness
- 2,600 acre addition to the Cruces Basin Wilderness
- 5,300 acre recommendation for the Valle Vidal (5.3% of the withdrawal area)



Alt. 5 (Wilderness)

- 67,996 acres recommended for wilderness (4.5% of the forest)
- 14,937 acre recommended Pecos expansion
- 9,361 acre recommended designation for the Valle Vidal (9.3% of withdrawal area)
- Overall 23,953 acre recommendation in the Cruces Basin/San Antonio Watershed



Wild and Scenic Eligibility

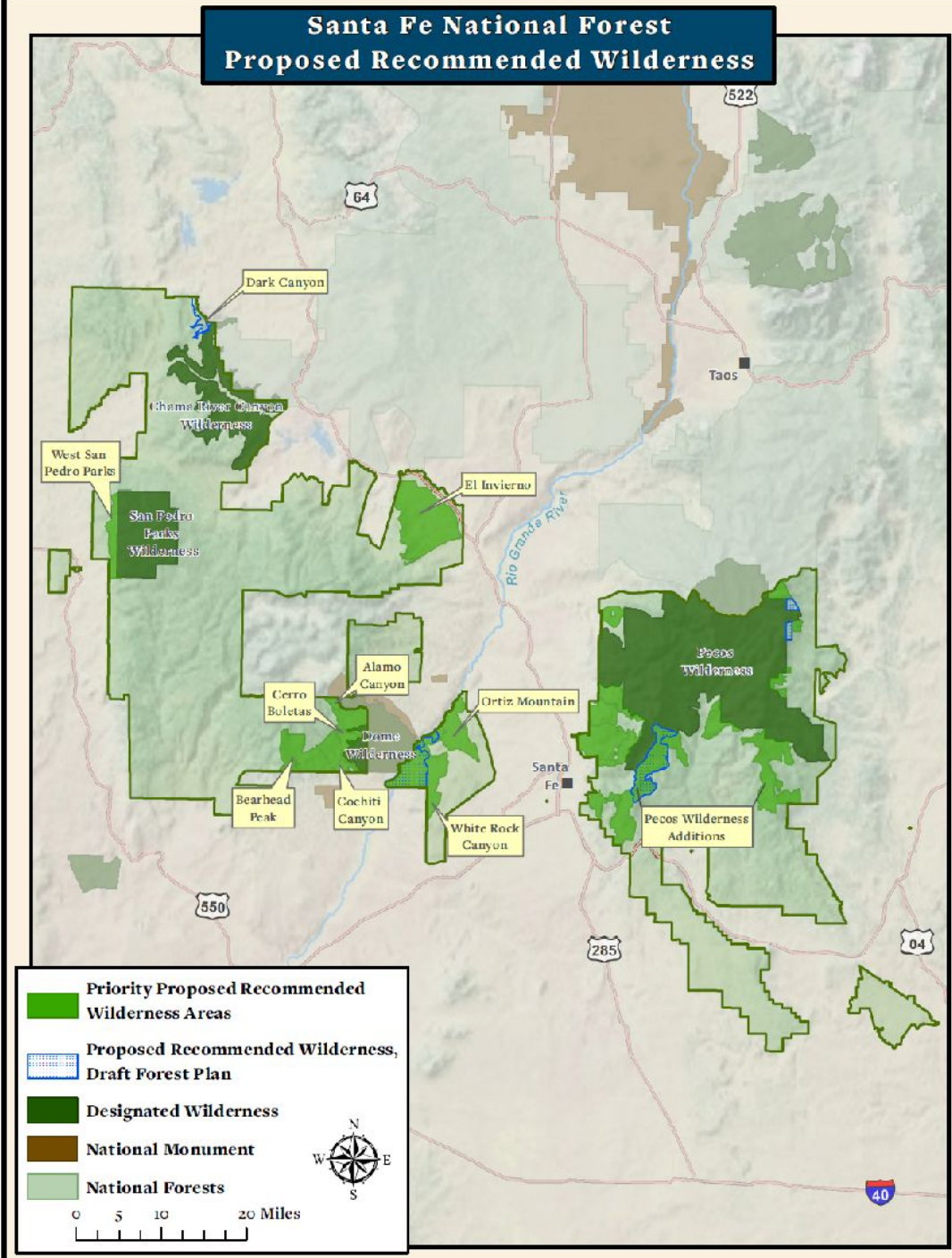
- The Carson is proposing to remove the wild and scenic eligibility of 62 river and stream segments
- Similar to recommended wilderness, eligible wild and scenic rivers must be managed to preserve the resource qualities that make them eligible for protections
- It is unclear why the Carson felt the need to review an analysis completed in 2000, but we oppose the reclassification of these segments

Sample comments

- The Valle Vidal encompasses 100,000 acres of mostly natural landscape where humanity's impacts have left little impressions. As such, the Carson should recommend much more than 9,000 acres for wilderness designation.
- The areas north of the Pecos Wilderness are fundamentally indistinguishable from the wilderness. I encourage the Carson to adopt its wilderness recommendations currently relegated to Alternative 5 for the northern Pecos expansion.
- The Wild and Scenic eligibility analysis that was undertaken by the Carson National Forest as part of this plan revision was unnecessary. In 2000 the Carson completed and documented a comprehensive eligibility evaluation, and no further analysis is required except where changed circumstances exist.

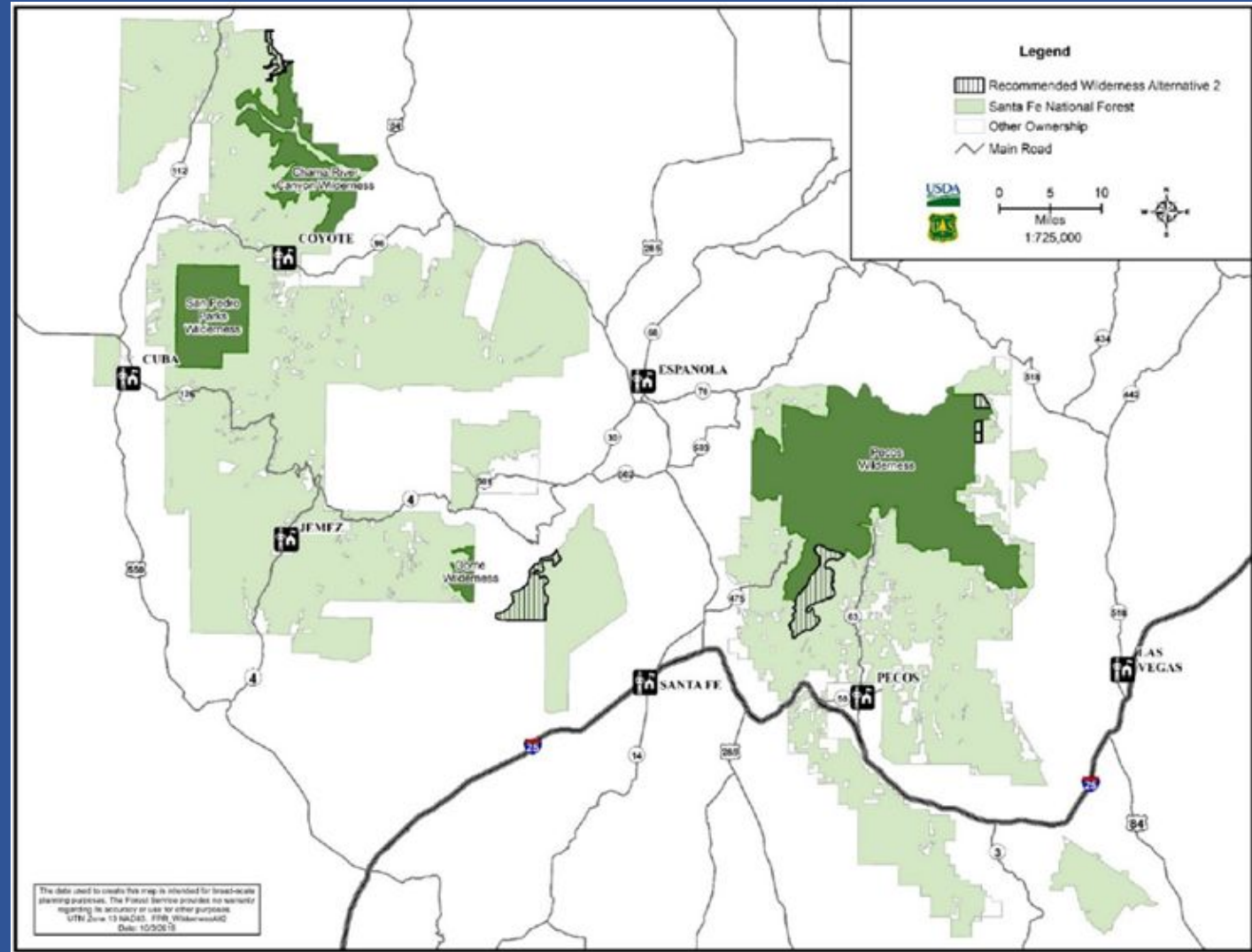
Santa Fe National Forest

Alternative	Acres of Recommended Wilderness	Percentage of Forest
Alternative 1 [no-action alternative]	1,853 acres	0.12%
Alternative 2 [preferred alternative]	25,868 acres	1.67%
Alternative 3	270,130 acres	17.5%
Alternative 4	0 acres	0%



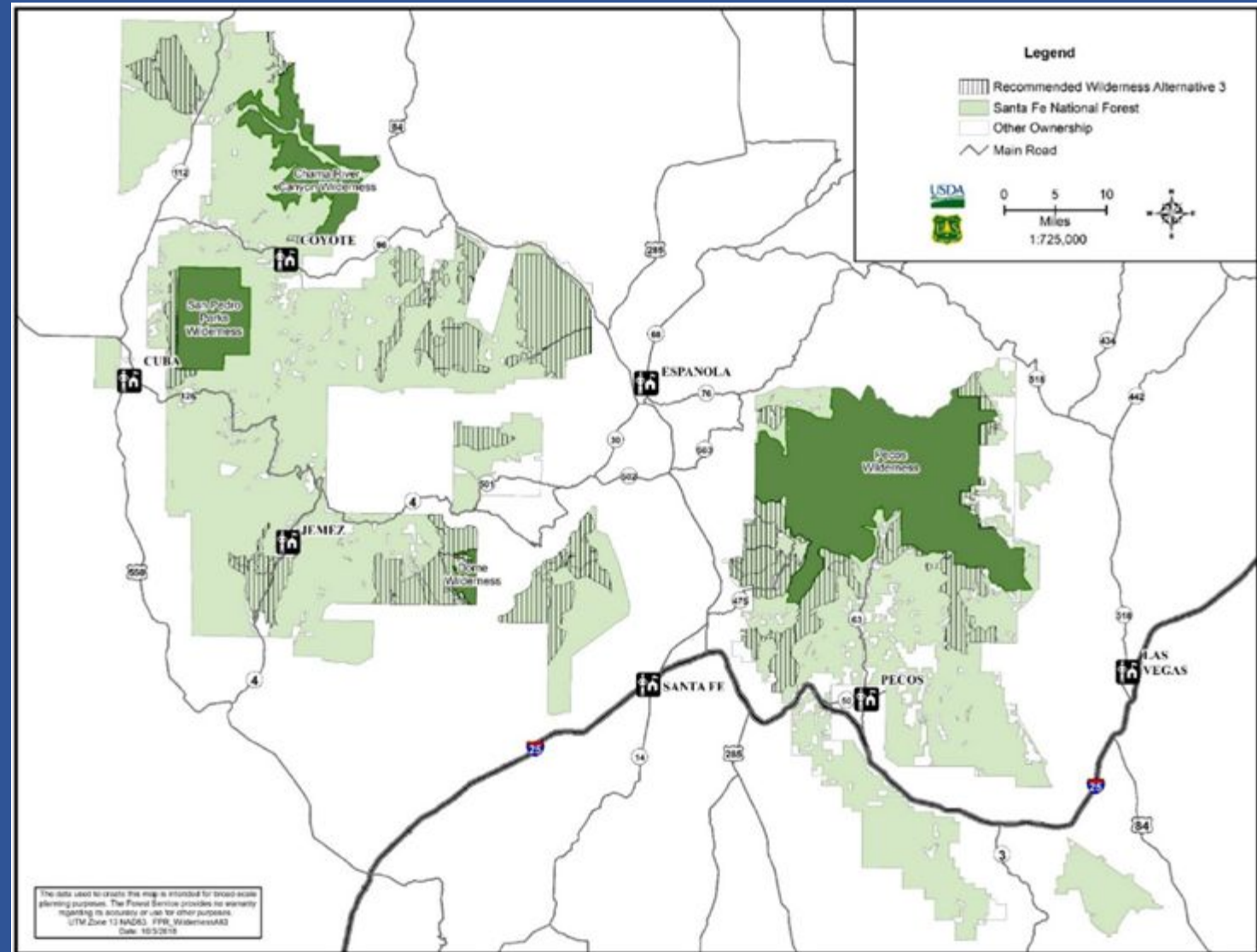
Alt. 2 (preferred)

- 10,274 acres in the Caja del Rio
- 13,375 acre additions to the Pecos Wilderness
- No additions to the San Pedro Parks Wilderness



Alt. 3 (Wilderness)

- 8,171 acre western addition to San Pedro Parks
- 29,416 acre recommendation on the Caja del Rio
- 25,198 acre addition to the Dome Wilderness
- About 81,290 acre additions to the Pecos Wilderness



Sample Comments

- The areas south, west, and east of the Pecos Wilderness are fundamentally indistinguishable from the wilderness. I encourage the Santa Fe to adopt its wilderness recommendations currently relegated to Alternative 3 for the southern Pecos expansion.
- I encourage the Santa Fe to include its Alternative 3 wilderness recommendations for the Caja del Rio in its final plan. This would create a larger area of wildlife connectivity between the Caja, the Bandelier Wilderness Area, and the Dome Wilderness Area and provide a greater resiliency to the effects of climate change.

Cibola National Forest

Alternative	Acres of Recommended Wilderness
Alternative A [no-action alternative]	0 acres
Alternative B	55,779 acres
Alternative C [preferred alternative]	24,265 acres
Alternative D	203,117 acres

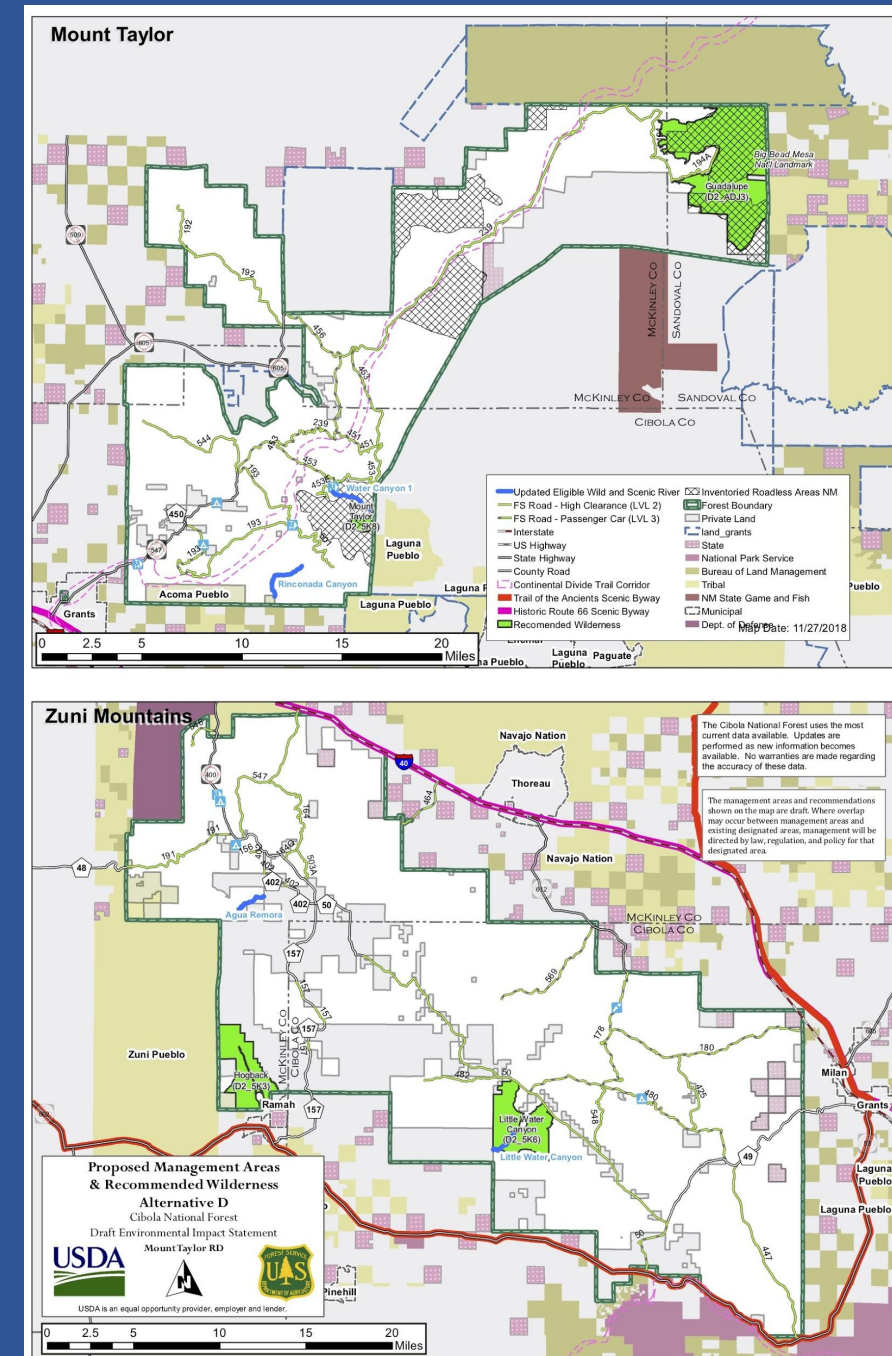
The Cibola NF consists of four geographically separated RDs: sky islands

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- Mexican Wolf EPA**
Cibola National Forest
Mountain Districts Plan Revision
- USDA U.S. Forest Service
- USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.
- 0 10 20 40 Miles
- Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area**
- Zone 1
 - Zone 2
 - Weekly Sightings
 - FS - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES (LVL 2)
 - FS Road - SUITABLE FOR PASSENGER CARS (LVL 3)
 - FS Road - MODERATE DEGREE OF USER COMFORT (LVL 4)
 - Unusable
 - US Highway
 - State Highway
 - County Road
 - Planning/Special Management Area
 - Existing Wilderness
 - International Boundary
 - National Boundary
 - Non-BS Ownership within FS Boundary
- Land Ownership**
- Bureau of Land Management
 - Bureau of Reclamation
 - Dept. of Defense
 - Federal Service
 - Indian Allotment
 - Tribal
 - National Park Service
 - CRA
 - State
 - NM State Game and Fish
 - Military Withdrawal
 - BLM Wilderness Study Area
- The management areas and recommendations shown on the map are draft. Where overlap may occur between management areas and existing designated areas, management will be directed by law, regulation, and policy for that designated area.
- The Cibola National Forest uses the most current data available. Updates are performed as new information becomes available. No warranties are made regarding the accuracy of these data.

Cibola NF
Mt Taylor Ranger District
Alternative D

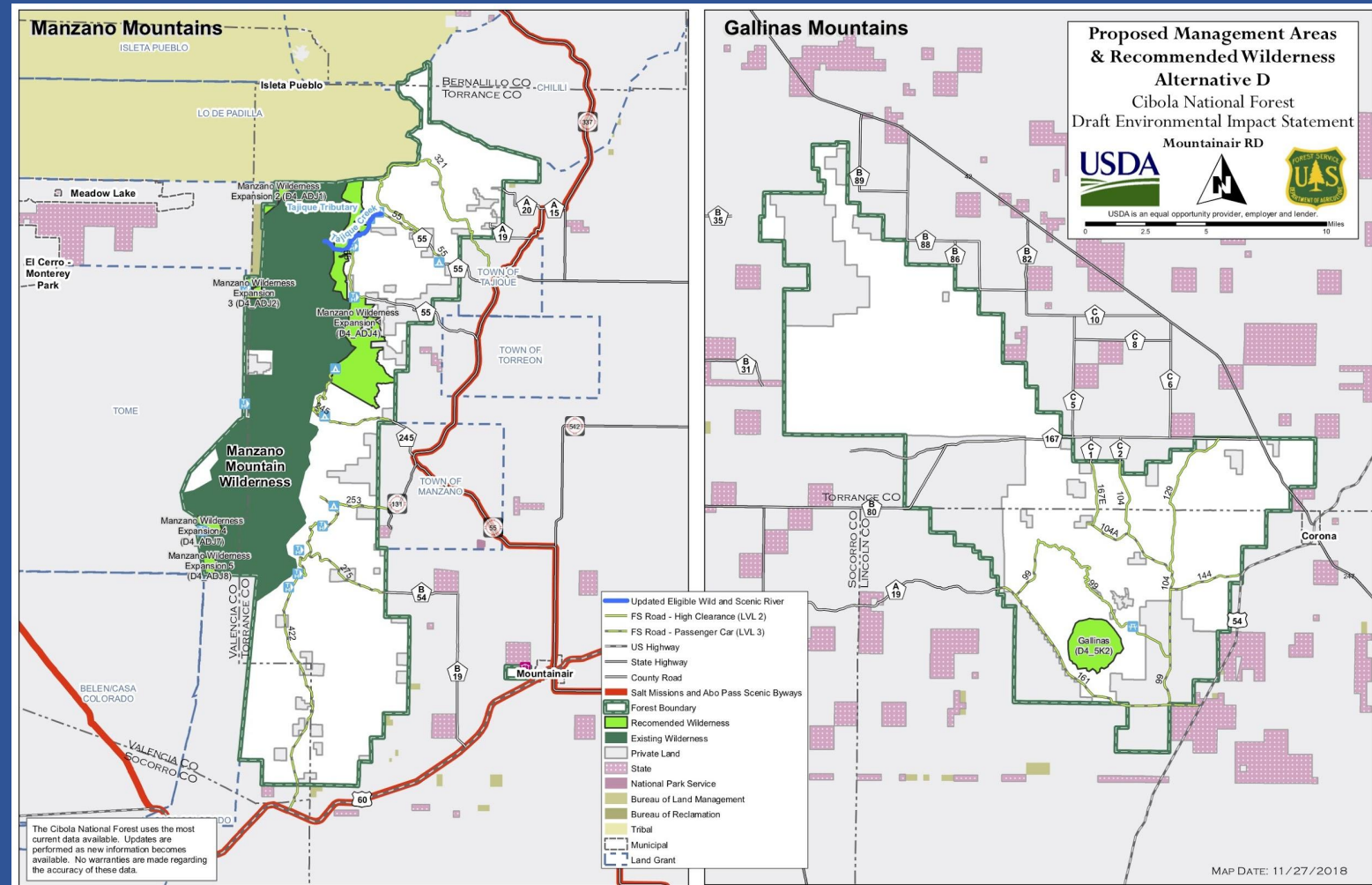
Create new wilderness:

- Guadalupe 15,000 acres
adjacent BLM WSA
- Mt. Taylor 475 acres
- Hogback 5,600 acres
- Little Water Canyon
also W&SR 6,300 acres



Cibola NF Mountainair Ranger Dist Alternative D

- Expand existing wilderness:
Manzano Mtn Wilderness
Expansions 1-5
7,100 acres
- Create new wilderness:
Gallinas 2,400 acres



Cibola NF Map for Magdalena Ranger District Alternative D

SAN MATEO MOUNTAINS

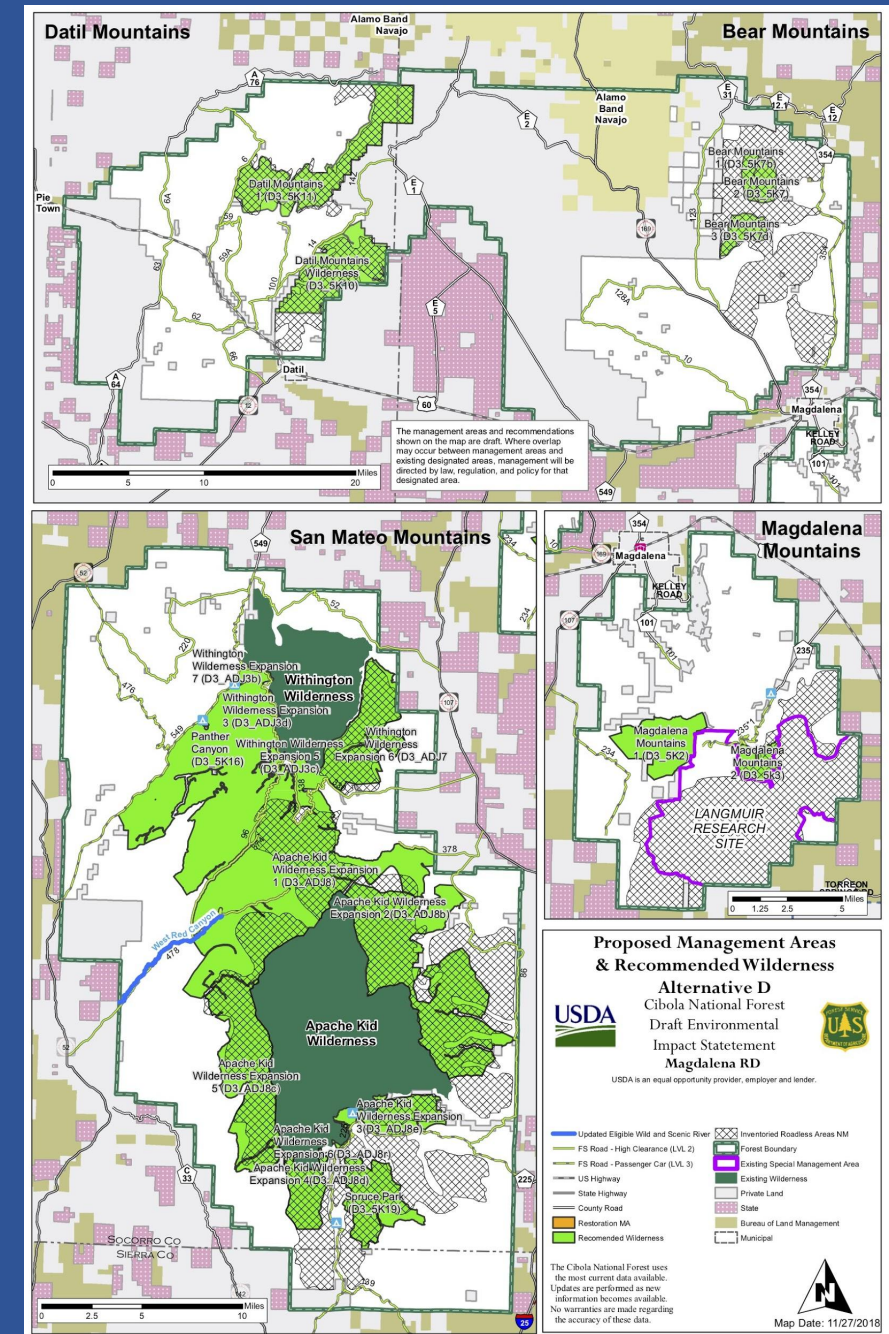
- Expand existing wilderness creating one large contiguous area:
 - Withington Wilderness Expansions 1-7 10,300 acres
 - Apache Kid Wilderness Expansions 1-6 76,000 acres
- Create new wilderness in close proximity:
 - Panther Canyon 27,600 acres
 - Spruce Park 6,200 acres

MAGDALENA MOUNTAINS

- Create new wilderness:
 - Magdalena Mountains 1 & 2 6,400 acres

BEAR MOUNTAINS and DATIL MOUNTAINS

- Create new wilderness:
 - Bear Mountains 1-3 7,200 acres
 - Datil Mountains Wilderness & 1 39,600 acres



Engaging in Forest Planning Effectively



Effective Engagement

- Figure out what you want the plan to include
- Weigh in early and often
 - Attend public meetings
 - Meet with the Forest Service
 - Write comments and letters – be specific & apply expertise or personal experience
 - Find and use best available science, connecting the dots as much as possible
- Connect with other groups and individuals working on forest planning and advocate collectively about common desires



Tips For Writing Comments

The more specific you can be, the better:

For example:

- Habitat for game species like elk and deer and non-game species many of which are threatened, endangered or otherwise at-risk
- Connectivity to help wildlife move across the landscape
- Opportunities for solitude to get away from human development
- Quiet recreation like hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, photography, etc.

Comment submission

DEADLINE 11/7

Carson National Forest

Submit online: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=47966>

Send by email: carsonplan@fs.fed.us

- Subject line: Comment on Carson Forest Draft Land Management Plan and DEIS

Submit via Sierra Club Link: <https://act.sierraclub.org/actions/RioGrande?actionId=AR0202498>

Santa Fe National Forest

Submit online: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?Project=49605>

Send by email: santafeforestplan@usda.gov

- Subject line: Comment on Santa Fe Forest Draft Land Management Plan and DEIS

Submit via Sierra Club link: <https://act.sierraclub.org/actions/RioGrande?actionId=AR0202503>

Cibola National Forest

Submit online: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=46268>

Send by email: cibolamtnsplanrevision@fs.fed.us

- Subject line: Comment on Cibola Forest Draft Land Management Plan and DEIS

Submit via Sierra Club link: <https://act.sierraclub.org/actions/RioGrande?actionId=AR0202502>

National Forest Planning Resources – FS websites

- Santa Fe National Forest -
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/santafe/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprd3791442>
- Carson National Forest –
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/carson/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5443166>
- Cibola National Forest –
https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/cibola/landmanagement/planning/?cid=FSBDEV3_065627

Letters to the editor

- Turn your comment into a letter to the editor for more impact!
- We have a LTE writing guide [here](#).
- Here's where you can send them:
 - **Albuquerque Journal**
 - Letters - <https://www.abqjournal.com/category/letters>
 - Submit LTE or OpEd - <http://www.abqjournal.com/letters/new>
 - Submit a Speak Out - <http://www.abqjournal.com/letters/speakup>
 - Speak Out - 50 words, Letters - 350 words, Column 650 words
 - **Santa Fe New Mexican**
 - http://www.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/
 - Send either letters (150 words) or My Views (600 words) to letters@sfnewmexican.com
- **Don't forget to send letters to small local papers and call into radio shows. You can also write comments on news articles online.**

Questions?