

From New Mexico Wild March 31, 2010

Comment by April 16 to protect Wilderness in the Gila!

The Gila National Forest is currently revising its forest management plan for the first time since 1986. The final version of this plan will determine how Wilderness, wildlife, water, and other natural resources are managed within the Forest for the next 20-30 years.

New Mexico Wild spent several years conducting on-the-ground surveys and GIS analyses of the roadless areas within the Forest. Through this process we identified 1.8 million acres of roadless areas with Wilderness characteristics, including 600,000 priority acres of Wilderness and Special Management Areas, that we believe should be recommended by the Gila National Forest as Wilderness.

The Forest's draft plans would fall well short of our recommendations. Alternative 2, the Forest's "preferred" alternative, only recommends 110,402 acres of Wilderness in 13 areas adjacent to existing Wilderness areas. Simply put, this does not go far enough. Furthermore, the Forest's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) does not adequately consider a reasonable range of alternatives for recommended Wilderness.

[Comment here by April 16, 2020, to encourage the Gila National Forest to include a robust Wilderness expansion in its final management plan.](https://p2a.co/abxjeOB) <https://p2a.co/abxjeOB>

A robust Wilderness expansion is the best way to protect the natural, cultural, historical, and ecological resources found within the Gila National Forest.

Finally, despite the Public Health Emergency issued by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and the State of National Emergency issued by President Donald Trump in response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Gila National Forest is currently holding firm on its public comment deadline of April 16. The Forest should keep the public comment period open until U.S. citizens are able to safely and effectively engage in the planning process.

[Please submit a comment by April 16, 2020 to encourage the Gila National Forest to include robust Wilderness expansion in its final management plan.](https://p2a.co/abxjeOB) <https://p2a.co/abxjeOB>

Be as specific as you can with your comment. Tell the Forest Service about the sites you love within the Gila National Forest and why you think they should be protected.

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