

# Cibola National Forest Travel Management Planning, Sandia Ranger District

April 2006 – August 2007

**Location:** New Mexico

## Background:

The Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands is located in New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas and is part of the Southwestern Region of the U.S. Forest Service. The Cibola NF is among many national forests beginning travel management planning to comply with the Travel Management Rule (2005) that requires the forests to designate a system of roads, trails and areas open to motor vehicle use. The Cibola NF asked the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution to assist in planning and convening a broad-based collaborative effort for this process. The Institute, working with contracted neutrals Kathleen Bond and Susan Hayman, conducted an initial assessment; the facilitators used the assessment's key findings and recommendations to design, facilitate and document a series of public workshops and a work group to develop recommendations for motorized use on the Sandia Ranger District.

## Results and Accomplishments

- Participants in the work group represented a broad diversity of interests. The work group reviewed use patterns and integrated feedback from public meetings to help develop recommendations. All meetings were open to the public, and there were many opportunities for the public to offer comments.
- After eight months of public workshops and work group meetings, the Forest Service presented a preliminary proposal and then held additional meetings during the scoping and Environmental Assessment comment periods.
- Participants were cautiously optimistic that the inclusive process led to a more informed decision that determined motorized routes, trails and areas.



Photo courtesy of Cibola National Forest

## Highlights/Innovations

- The Cibola National Forest used both a multi-stakeholder work group, which included Forest Service staff as participants, and public workshops to encourage more active public engagement in developing travel management recommendations.
- Participants reported that the collaborative process on the Sandia District fostered important working relationships that are expected to endure beyond this specific project.
- A variety of tools and activities were used throughout the process. Work group members found the use of interactive maps to be particularly helpful, while participants in the public workshops appreciated the educational presentations, small and large group discussions, and the Q & A sessions.
- Overall, participants in this process reported an enhanced understanding of the Travel Management Rule, the Forest Service's decision making process, and how public input is used in the development of proposals.

## Credits

### Partners from National Roster of ECR Practitioners

Susan Hayman (North Country Associates) and Kathleen Bond (KTB Decision Resources)

### U.S. Institute Project Manager

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