

Decision Notice
& Finding of No Significant Impact
Jacob Lake Campground Reconstruction Project

**US Forest Service
North Kaibab Ranger District, Kaibab National Forest
Coconino County, State**

Location and Background

Jacob Lake Campground is located at the junction of US Highway 89A and State Highway 67 at Jacob Lake, Arizona. The campground includes approximately 40 acres, of which about 20 acres have developed sites and roads. Other improvements, facilities, and businesses in the area are: Jacob Lake Inn and the US Forest Service Kaibab Plateau Visitor Center to the west across Highway 89A and Jacob Lake Campground Group Area and Picnic Area to the South.

In 1938 the campground was constructed and originally known as the Jacob Lake Forest Camp. During 1961, 1974, and between 1983 through 1986, a variety of construction activities were completed within the campground. The most recent construction activity was in 2003 to replace the existing amphitheater with a new barrier free amphitheater, parking sites, and path from the parking sites to the amphitheater. The work activities also included reconstruction of the Jacob Lake Campground Group Area and Picnic Area.

Decision

It is my decision to select Alternative 2 (EA page 9) and implement its proposed treatments, based on the results of the analysis documented in the Jacob Lake Campground EA, and in consideration of the content and context of public comments. An environmental assessment (EA) for the Jacob Lake Campground Reconstruction Project is available for public review at the Kaibab National Forest, North Kaibab Ranger Station, 430 South Main Street, Fredonia, Arizona 86022-0248.

Decision Rationale

I selected Alternative 2 because it best meets the purpose and need for the action identified in the Environmental Assessment. Alternative 2 provides for approximately 50 campsites, all barrier free facilities and a safe ingress/egress entrance road into the campground. No treatments would occur under Alternative 1.

Based upon my review of all alternatives, I have decided to implement Alternative #2 (Selected Alternative). Alternative 2 proposes the following activities to meet the purpose and need:

1. Replacing existing vault and flush toilets with new barrier free vault toilets.

2. Reconstructing interior access roads and parking spurs; providing barrier free access from parking spurs to campsites.
3. Relocating existing entrance/exist road to the north of the current location to provide for improved sight distance.
4. Redesigning the campground using only two loops.
5. Constructing a new barrier free mini-group area for small groups to camp together.
6. Upgrading existing RV host sites.
7. Constructing a new barrier free fee station.
8. Rehabilitating areas disturbed during construction and removal of old facilities and roads.
9. Adding additional barrier free parking for the amphitheater.
10. Upgrading existing potable water distribution system.
11. Constructing new barrier free campsites.
12. Identifying and removing hazardous trees in accordance with the “Hazardous Tree Management and Marking Guidelines on the North Kaibab Ranger District”.

Alternatives Considered (EA, page 8)

In addition to the proposed alternative, I considered one other alternative. A comparison of these alternatives can be found in the EA on page 10 (Table 1. Alternatives Comparison).

Alternative #1: No Action: Under the No Action alternative, current management plans would continue to guide management of the project area. The Forest Service would continue to deal with health and safety issues within the campground and only two of the existing facilities would comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Alternatives Eliminated from Detailed Study (EA, page 9)

Composting Toilets: This alternative would use composting style vault toilets. This alternative was dropped from detailed analysis for the following reasons: composting toilets are not as efficient in cold climates. The elevation for the campground is about 7,920 feet. If the decision was made to keep part of the campground open during the winter months, the toilets could not be used. In addition, these types of toilets require daily maintenance, installation requires construction of a basement, and composted material must be disposed of in an approved landfill. The closest approved sanitary landfill is located approximately 15 miles to the west of the City of Fredonia.

Reconstruct Campground in Two Stages: This alternative would propose reconstructing half of the campground one operating season while keeping the other half of the campground open for use then reconstructing the other half of the campground the next year, thinking this would provide better customer service. This alternative was dropped for the following reasons: safety would be compromised by allowing campground visitors and construction activities to be in the same area; the construction noise would impact the camper’s recreational experiences; and the construction costs would be greater and require more coordination (timing) between the contractor and sub-contractors, and would not provide a quality customer services. Also, this alternative would not meet the funding cycle for Forest Service Capital Improvement projects. Project are proposed many years in advance, and there would be no possibility for a second phase for at least 5 years and possible longer.

Mitigation Measures and Design Criteria (EA, pages 9-10)

The following design criteria are included in the design of Alternative #2. These measures have been successfully used on past projects similar to those listed here to ensure quality in the implementation of a project and to reduce the effects on other resources.

- Disturbed areas will be seeded with native species in order to quickly re-establish ground cover. The Forest Botanist and Landscape Architect will provide input for the species mix.
- Protect all residual vegetation and improvements will be protected to the extent practicable if trees need to be removed during reconstruction activities.
- A Limited Operating Period (LOP) from **March 1 to August 15**, inclusive, will be in effect for all operations and activities within ¼ mile of active nest trees for northern goshawks. Nest checks will be conducted after July 15th, if nest or nests are determined to be inactive, then work may proceed.
- Follow the Kaibab National Forest's "Noxious Weeds" direction in Appendix B for construction activities.
- Acceptable slash treatments are removal and chipping.
- Implement erosion control measures to minimize soil erosion and storm water pollution during vegetation management and site reconstruction.
- Minimize resource damage and recreation impacts from increased dispersed camping (resulting from the campground being closed during construction) by: developing and implementing a communication plan for providing campground news releases, timely information at visitor contact points, signing the entrance to the campground with alternative camping site information, a projected timeline, increase patrols, and visitor contacts in the area.
- Plant ponderosa pine trees or other native plants where needed to provide screening between sites.
- Minimize dust, construction noise, and disturbance to adjacent Jacob Lake Inn facilities by watering roads, campsites, or other construction areas, and not beginning work before 7 a.m. and not working after 6 p.m. during the operating season.

Public Involvement and Scoping (EA, page 8)

The proposal was listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Quarters for 2006. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during scoping, April 12, 2006 through May 19, 2006. In addition, as part of the public involvement process, the agency mailed out 32 scoping letters. As a result of this activity, the North Kaibab Ranger District received 2 comments. The first comment provided a recommendation on the type of

vault toilet to use in the campground. The second comment asks to consider reconstructing only half of the campground one year and then reconstructing the other half the next year.

Using the comments from the public, other agencies, the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, and Hopi Tribe (see *Issues* section), the interdisciplinary team identified several comments regarding the effects of the proposed action. No significant issues were identified during project scoping. A list of non-significant issues and reasons regarding their categorization as non-significant may be found in the project record.

The Jacob Lake Campground notice and comment document was sent to interested parties on August 31, 2006. The Notice and Comment Period ended on September 4, 2006. The Forest did not receive any comments or expression of interest by the close of the comment period.

Finding of No Significant Impact

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. I base my finding on the following:

1. My finding of no significant environmental effects is not biased by the beneficial effects of the action.
2. There will be no significant effects on public health and safety, because the campground will be closed during reconstruction. Jacob Lake reconstruction will improve public health and safety (see EA page 7).
3. There will be no significant effects on unique characteristics of the area. Unique characteristics of the general area include the North Rim - Grand Canyon National Park, Vermilion Cliff National Monument (BLM), Paria Canyon /Vermilion Cliff Wilderness and the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument (BLM). The limited scope and the spatial distinctness of the project area result in no indication that the Selected Alternative would have any effect on the above-mentioned areas.

There are no perennial streams within the boundaries of the analysis area, and the activities are not expected to have any appreciable effect on any perennial streams outside of the analysis area. There are no regulated floodplains, wetlands, or prime farmlands.

4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial because there is no known scientific controversy over the impacts of the project. (see EA pages 11-25).
5. We have considerable experience with the types of activities to be implemented. The effects analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk (see EA pages 11-25).

6. The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, because the activities are specific to Jacob Lake Campground. Future proposals within the North Kaibab Ranger District or in surrounding areas will be analyzed on their merits and implemented or not, independent of the actions currently proposed (see EA pages 11-25).
7. The cumulative impacts are not significant (see EA pages 11-25).
8. The action will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, because the Jacob Lake Campground has been professionally surveyed for heritage resources. No sites were found. Any sites located during the proposed activities will be protected by standard protection measures (see EA pages 22 and heritage report in the Project Record). The action will also not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources, because there are none in the reconstruction area (see EA page 22 and Inventory Standards and Accounting Report in the Project Record)
9. The action will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species act of 1973, because none occur in the reconstruction area (see EA pages 12-22).
10. The selected alternative conforms to all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and requirements (EA page 11-25).

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

The Selected Alternative is fully consistent with the KNF LMP. The planned activities will move the existing conditions of Jacob Lake Campground in the direction of the desired condition and accomplish recreation objectives (EA, page 7). These findings are based upon the following rationale:

National Forest Management Act

The Kaibab National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan was adopted on April 15, 1988 and has been amended seven times. Projects are to be consistent with the Forest Plan per regulations at 36 CFR 219.8(e) per 2005 NFMA regulations. The project was designed in conformance with the Kaibab LMP long-term goals and objectives on public lands for outdoor recreation (reference EA page 17). I find that all actions included in Alternative 1 are consistent with direction in the *Kaibab National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* as amended.

Management Indicator Species (MIS)

There are no MIS assigned to EMA 12 so this analysis did not address MIS. Therefore the selected alternative would have no effect on population numbers or trends for MIS. This population analysis and habitat information meets NFMA obligations for Management Indicator Species under 36 CFR 219.14(f).

National Historic Preservation Act

The surveys were completed and concurrence from SHPO has been received (see Inventory Standards and Accounting Report in the Project Record).

Endangered Species Act

Informal consultation has been completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The District Wildlife Biologist has prepared a Biological Evaluation Assessment to reflect the effects of Alternative #2 activities on Proposed, Endangered and Threatened Sensitive (PETS) species. There were no effects on PETS species. The Biological Evaluation Assessment and associated documents are in the project record.

Implementation Date

This project may be implemented immediately after publication of the notice of decision in the *Arizona Daily Sun*.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215. An appeal, including attachments, must be filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand delivery, express delivery, or messenger service) with the appropriate Appeal Deciding Officer (36 CFR 215.8) within 45 days following the publication date of the legal notice of this decision in the *Arizona Daily Sun*, Flagstaff, Arizona. It is the responsibility of the appellant to ensure their appeal is received in a timely manner. The publication date of the legal notice in the *Arizona Daily Sun* is the *exclusive* means for calculating the time to file an appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.15(a). Appellants should not rely on date or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Appeals must be filed with: US Forest Service, Southwestern Region, ATTN: Mike Williams, Forest Supervisor, 800 South 6th Street, William AZ 86046-2899 or by fax at 928-635-8208. If hand delivered, the appeal must be received at the above address during business hours (Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00pm and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.), excluding holidays.

Electronic appeals must be submitted to: appeals-southwestern-kaibab@fs.fed.us.

In electronic appeals, the subject line must contain the name of the project being appealed, Jacob Lake Campground Reconstruction Project Decision. Electronic appeals must be submitted in MS Word, Word Perfect, or Rich Text Format (RTF). The appeal must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be requires. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic appeals.

Comments received from an authorized representative(s) of an organization are considered those of the organization only; individual members of that organization do not meet appeal eligibility solely on the basis of membership in an organization; the member(s) must submit comments as an individual in order to meet appeal eligibility. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14.

If an appeal is received on this project there may be informal resolution meetings and/or conference calls between the Responsible Official and the appellant. These discussions would

take place within 15 days after the closing date for filing an appeal. All such meetings are open to the public. If you are interested in attending any informal resolution discussions, please contact the Responsible Official.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.9, if no appeal is received, implementation of this project may begin on, but not before, five business days from the close of the appeal filing period. If an appeal is received, implementation may not occur for 15 days following the date of the appeal disposition.

Information Contacts

For additional information concerning this decision or the US Forest Service appeal process, contact Steven E. Martinet at the North Kaibab Ranger District, P.O. Box 248 or 430 S. Main, Fredonia, AZ 86022, by telephone at (928) 643-8163, or by e-mail at smartinet@fs.fed.us.

LOUISE CONGDON
Acting District Ranger
North Kaibab Ranger District
Kaibab National Forest

Date