

**DRAFT**

# **Arizona National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Plan**



**Public Engagement Summary - Scoping  
Phase, 2017**

Prepared by the **National Park Service Rivers, Trails and  
Conservation Assistance Program**, Intermountain Region



At the request of **US Forest Service**, Southwestern Region



## **Project Purpose**

The Arizona National Scenic Trail (AZNST) stretches over 800 miles across Arizona from Mexico to the Utah border, showcasing the state's diverse vegetation, wildlife, wilderness and scenery, and providing unparalleled opportunities for hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians and other trail users. The AZNST was designated by an amendment to the National Trails System Act included in the 2009 Omnibus Public Land Management Act.

Consistent with the National Trails System Act (NTSA) of 1968, the US Forest Service, Southwestern Region is preparing a comprehensive plan for the Arizona National Scenic Trail. The comprehensive plan is a programmatic and strategic document intended to guide management of the trail and its corridor.

The US Forest Service partnered with the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program and local trail partners to obtain feedback from stakeholders and members of the public about the USFS proposed action during a 60 day scoping period from August 1 to October 1, 2017.

The goal of the engagement effort was to provide meaningful opportunities for cooperation between the USFS, stakeholders, cooperators and members of the public. It built on a previous, statewide public sensing project completed by the USFS Enterprise Team in 2012 which was intended to create an understanding of appropriate sideboards for the comprehensive plan.

The specific public engagement objectives of the 2017 scoping outreach effort were as follows:

- Obtain public and stakeholder about the USFS proposed action during the formal project scoping period, with an emphasis on several specific planning-related topics;
- Improve understanding of current challenges and opportunities facing the AZNST;
- Re-engage members of the public, local government, Arizona Trail Association, federal land management agencies and others in with the AZNST.

This document summarizes the feedback obtained during this effort.

## **Outreach Methods**

Six public open houses were held along the length of the AZNST in Tucson, Superior, Tempe, Payson, Flagstaff and Kanab (UT) during the weeks of August 7 and 14, 2017. Each open house was held for two hours in the evening at a public venue. The same format – a brief presentation combined with facilitated interactive stations– was utilized for each meeting to improve consistency and reliability of public feedback across meeting locations.

Each open house featured four information stations that presented relevant content and asked for participant feedback.

**Station #1** served as an introduction to the AZNST and the comprehensive plan process. At this station, participants were asked to respond free-form to the question *"What is your connection to the Arizona Trail?"*

**Station #2** focused on the concept of a national scenic trail corridor and the proposed objectives and practices related to forest management, minerals, range, natural and cultural resources, and scenery. At this station, participants were asked: *"What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the AZNST that can be addressed by the comprehensive plan?"* with an option to select up to two items from a list of seven options.

**Station #3** presented information about recreation management including visitor information, facilities, special uses/events and carrying capacity. Participants were asked two questions and rate each on a one to ten scale: *"How frequently do you feel crowded when using the AZNST?"* and *"What do you think about the Arizona NST as a venue for organized or commercial events?"*.

**Station #4** gathered geographically specific participant feedback. Maps of the entire trail corridor were available for participants to mark and offer geographically-specific feedback.

Information about the proposed action was made available at the initiation of the scoping period on August 1 via email and online at the project website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/azt/land-resources-management>. The project website included project summaries, background information, presentation materials and other relevant information.

The open houses were publicized statewide through traditional media and social media accounts of the US Forest Service and Arizona Trail Association. Media outlets in Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff, Payson, Kearny, and St. George (UT) carried information about the meetings. See appendix A for a full listing of project-related media coverage.

Limited on-site outreach was conducted, specifically at the Schultz Creek Trailhead in Flagstaff.



## Public Meeting Results

The open houses were attended by 152 members of the public who submitted approximately 570 individual points of feedback (map comments, interactive exercise responses or comment forms). Attendees were asked to list a group affiliation. This self-

identification indicated that approximately third of all participants were active members or staff of the Arizona Trail Association.

Arizona's congressional delegation also took an interest in the project. Three of the meetings were attended by staff from Representative Tom O'Hallaran's office. One meeting was attended by a staff member for Senator John McCain.

Federal agency representatives from local offices supported each of the meetings. Leadership and staff were present from the US Forest Service, National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management, allowing attendees to discuss nearby, on-the-ground opportunities and issues.

Local and state agencies were also represented, with staff from Arizona State Parks and Trails, Pima County, Pinal County, and the City of Flagstaff attending one or more of the meetings.

## **Summary Responses**

This responses for each of the three primary feedback exercises are aggregated below.

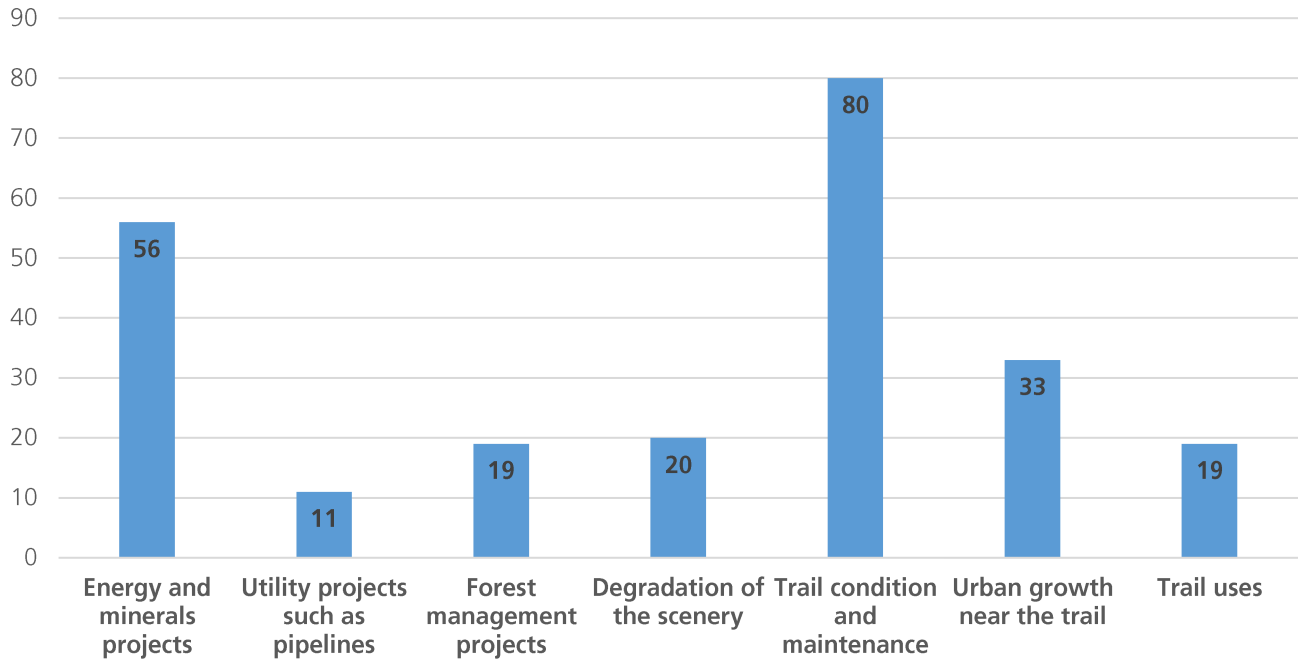
### ***Biggest challenges***

Participants submitted 238 responses to the question of challenges facing the AZNST. Trail condition and maintenance was identified most frequently as a challenge at each of the six meetings.

Response patterns differed slightly by meeting location, however. Responses in central and southern Arizona (Tucson and Superior) were more likely to identify energy or mineral projects as a prominent challenge while participants in Flagstaff expressed concern about urban growth. These differences are likely based on local trail and resource conditions, along with the exposure or prominence of various proposals in each local community.

## What are the biggest challenges facing the AZNST that can be addressed by the comprehensive plan?

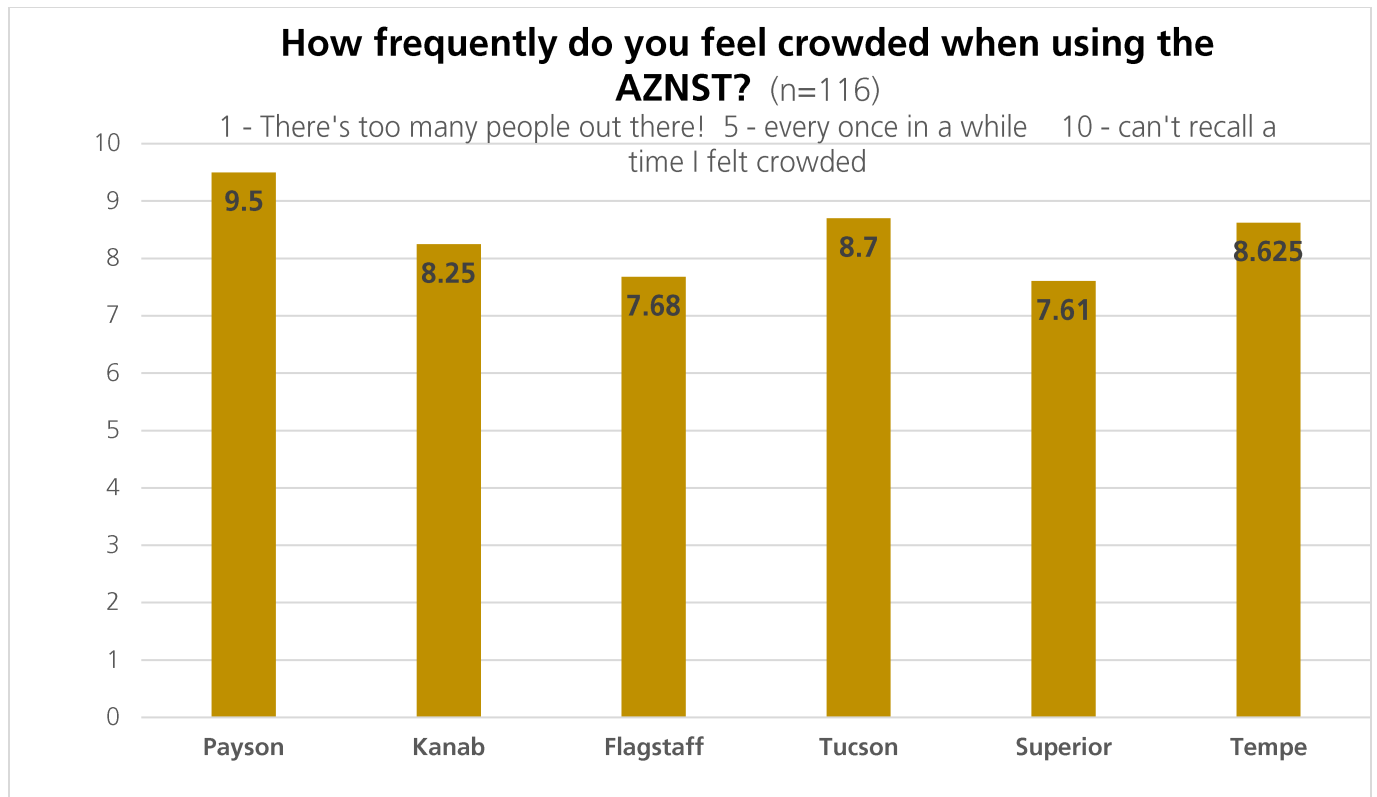
Combined statewide responses (n=238)



### **Level of Crowding**

Participants generally expressed low levels of crowding on the AZNST, with Superior and Flagstaff participants mostly likely to feel crowded occasionally. For example, 5 out of 37 (or 13%) respondents in Flagstaff expressed feeling crowded at least “every once in a while” below five on a one to ten scale. In Tempe and Tucson, no participants indicated a score lower than five on a one to ten scale.

Participants in Flagstaff were also the most likely to discuss trail conflicts and trail management strategies. This is likely due to the urban or semi-urban nature of the AZNST in the Flagstaff vicinity.



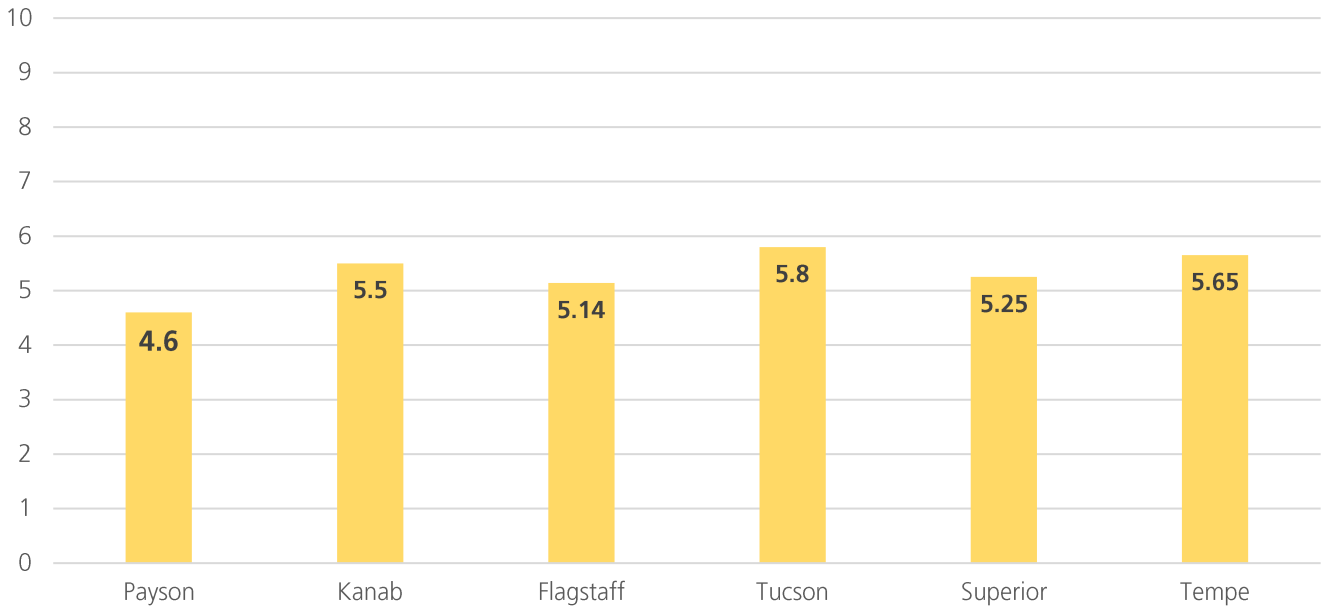
### ***Organized and Commercial Events***

Participants expressed mixed views on the suitability of the AZNST as a venue for organized and commercial events. The average ratings across all meeting locations are relatively consistent, from a low of 4.6 to a high of 5.8. However, responses in Flagstaff were more likely to fall on either end of the one to ten scale, while the remaining meetings showed a strong convergence towards the center.

In discussions with participants, one commonly cited predictor of support or non-support was the use of the revenue generated by the events. If the revenue was used to benefit the trail (through contributions to the Arizona Trail Association or other means), participants were generally more likely to support an individual event.

# What do you think about the AZNST as a venue for organized or commercial events? (n=139)

1 = the trail should never be used for events 5 = not sure, could be okay in certain circumstances 10 = the more events the better



# Individual Meeting Summaries

## Payson, AZ

**Date:** August 8, 2017

**Location:** Julia Randall Middle School

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### Public Attendees (14):

Matt Nelson (ATA)

Roger Smith (ATA)

Shawn Redfield (ATA)

Tim Colby (ATA)

Joe Longbottom (ATA)

Julie Smith (ATA)

Keith Brekhus (Congressman Tom O'Halleran's Office)

Bern Juracka

Karen Burbank

Jeannie Filson

Nancy Hodges

Sheila DeSchaaf

Robert Sanders

Alexis Bechman (Payson Roundup)

### Agency Attendees:

Laura White (USFS Trail Administrator)

Julie Molzahn (USFS Planner)

Adam Milnor (NPS RTCA)

Rose Harley (Coconino NF)

Brad Cooper (Tonto NF)

Paul Burghard (Tonto NF)

Brady Van Dragt (Coconino NF)

Duane Hubbard (NPS Tonto National Monument)



### Exercise Results:

#### ***What's your connection to the Arizona Trail?***

I luv hiking long distance trails

Trail steward --- love hiking have hiked section + hosted trail hikers

AZT Member Love Hiking! Live in Payson Yes & Yes - have built many trails in several states – worked on AZT

Trailwork appeals to me. Strong back + a weak mind.



Trail Steward Mazatzal Divide Segment 23a Love the outdoors!

Trail Juniper sponsor. Love the access to the trail in this area. Want to help promote this awesome amenity

Recreation + also work for a govt entity. Interested in growth potential for tourism in communities near trail

***How frequently do you feel crowded when using the AZNST?***

Responses: 13

Avg: 9.5

***What do you think about the AZNST as a venue for organized or commercial events?***

Responses: 12

Avg: 4.6

***What do you see as the biggest long-term challenges facing the AZNST that can be address by the comprehensive plan?***

Payson Responses – Biggest Challenges	
Energy and minerals projects	6
Utility projects such as pipelines	1
Forest management projects	3
Degradation of the scenery	1
Trail condition and maintenance	10
Urban growth near the trail	1
Trail uses	3
TOTAL RESPONSES	25

# Kanab, UT

**Date:** August 9, 2017

**Location:** Kanab City Library

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## Public Attendees (9):

Sabrina Carlson (ATA)  
Jayme Church (Kanab Office of Tourism)  
Mary Poe (High Desert BackCountry Horsemen)  
Noel Poe (High Desert BackCountry Horsemen)  
Carol Lyng  
Kevin Barlow  
DeLynn Brainerd  
Art Brainerd

Mike McTeer

## Agency Attendees:

Laura White (USFS Trail Administrator)  
Julie Molzahn (USFS Planner)  
Adam Milnor (NPS RTCA)  
Dan Gunn (Kaibab NF)  
Allison Ayers (Kaibab NF)  
David Hercher (Kaibab NF)  
Missy Robinson (Dixie NF)

## Exercise Results:

### ***What's your connection to the Arizona Trail?***

Seeds of Stewardship youth outreach coordinator for the Arizona Trail Association Also AZT user! Mountain biker hiker backpacker

We live close to AZ Trail. Visit N. Kaibab when it gets hot in Kanab.

### ***How frequently do you feel crowded when using the AZNST?***

Responses: 8

Avg: 8.25

### ***What do you think about the AZNST as a venue for organized or commercial events?***

Responses: 9

Avg: 5.5

***What do you see as the biggest long-term challenges facing the AZNST that can be address by the comprehensive plan?***

Kanab Responses – Biggest Challenges	
Energy and minerals projects	2
Utility projects such as pipelines	4
Forest management projects	0
Degradation of the scenery	3
Trail condition and maintenance	7
Urban growth near the trail	1
Trail uses	0
TOTAL RESPONSES	17

# Flagstaff, AZ

**Date:** August 10, 2017

**Location:** Flagstaff Aquaplex

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## Public Attendees (52):

Chip Davis (Congressman O'Halleran's Office)

Art Babbott (Coconino County Supervisor)

Eric Duthie (Town of Tusayan)

Patrick Byrne (ATA)

Sabrina Carlson (ATA)

James McFadden (ATA)

Andrea Michaels (ATA)

Ellen Wade (ATA)

Bill Wade (ATA)

Steve Chaffee (ATA)

Sarah Jansen (ATA)

Tammy Nelson (ATA)

Jon Schour (ATA)

Anne McGuffey (ATA)

Aaron Sierfert (ATA)

Jody Bartz (ATA)

Daniel Snyder (ATA)

Ian Torrence (ATA)

Susan Campbell (ATA)

Jane Bronson (ATA)

Bianca Holderman (ATA)

Diane Meuser (ATA)

Jane Jackson (ATA)

Bruce Belman (ATA)

Emily Torrence (ATA)

Justin Inglis (ATA, REI)

Judy Henzler (ATA)

Linda Van Tolborg (ATA)

Mark Losetly (American Conservation Experience)

Chris Baker (American Conservation Experience)

Anthony Quintille (Flagstaff Biking Organization)

Charity Lee (City of Flagstaff)

Afton McKusick (Arizona Conservation Corps)

Sean Hammond (Arizona State Parks and Trails)

Margie Goulden (Sierra Club)

Aliceyn Gitlin (Sierra Club)

Joe Shannon (Sierra Club)

Josh Talham (*partly illegible*)

Diana Salazar

Jeff Goulden

Melissa Bird

Joyce Bayles

Tom Hawkins

Don Bayles

Valerie Bryant

William Wilson

Esther Breckenridge

Jerry Breckenridge

John Grahame

Gary Nelson

Mark Stubblefield

**Federal Agency Attendees:**

Laura White (USFS Trail Administrator)

Julie Molzahn (USFS Planner)

Francisco Valenzuela (USFS Regional Recreation Director)

Adam Milnor (NPS RTCA)

Chris Brothers (Grand Canyon National Park)

Rachel Bennet (Grand Canyon National Park)

Steve Sullivan (Grand Canyon National Park)

Janet Balsom (Grand Canyon National Park)

Vernon Cody (Flagstaff Area Monuments)

Bill Gibson (BLM, State Office)

Heather Provencio (Kaibab NF)

Jacob Schmugge (Kaibab NF)

Kendell Cicanek (Kaibab NF)

Jacqueline Banks (Kaibab NF)

Brady Vandragt (Coconino NF)

Sean Murphy (Coconino NF)

Matt Engbring (Coconino NF)

**Exercise Results:**

***What's your connection to the Arizona Trail?***

ATA member – section hiker – hope to live long enough to complete! Best part of moving to Flag from upstate NY!

Hiker youth crews

I bike the AZ Trail frequently

Hiker with grandkids + family

Love it live real close to it

AZT Trail Steward & hiker

Hiker

Hiker

hiker

Steward, hiker, biker, member, backpacker

History, cultural site + hiker

ATA member hiker

Hiker Biker Bkpr Trail Builder

Bikepacker, ATA Member

Steward, hiker

AZ Native as are many I know, great idea for preservation effort

Steward trail angel gateway community advisor Flagstaff trail celebration organizer

Current hiker of segments. Future through hiker (with luck)

AZ State Parks & Trails – provide grant funds for trails

Thru-hiked entire trail, plus I run + hike often on Flagstaff segments

Hiker, biker nature preserver/protector advocate

Steward, hiker, biker, donor, REI employee, Arizona resident and overall outdoor enthusiast!

Dale was a visionary!

Friends with Dale Shewalter Father of the AZT! 200 miles in...

Done Utah border to Russell tank, plus other segments. Happiest days of my life!

Steward, runner, RACE DIRECTOR

Thru hiked the Arizona Trail Class of 2017 & Trail Angel & ATA member

Runner, biker, Race Dir Close the Gap Vol, MAZ segment vol

Oh take me back to the Arizona trail  
Where I can walk the hills & dales Where I  
can watch the set low And be guided  
home by the moonlit flow. A new hiker.  
Love it.

I worked as a 1039 Seasonal employee on the trail to help pay for collect. During those memorial summer seasons the Coconino NF Trail crew accomplished 26 miles of new construction. – M

Steward MTB Rider Coconino HS coach, runner

***How frequently do you feel crowded when using the AZNST? (1=often, 10=never)***

Responses: 37

Avg: 7.68

***What do you think about the AZNST as a venue for organized or commercial events?***

Responses: 48

Avg: 5.14

***What do you see as the biggest long-term challenges facing the AZNST that can be address by the comprehensive plan?***

Flagstaff Responses – Biggest Challenges	
Energy and minerals projects	18
Utility projects such as pipelines	4
Forest management projects	4
Degradation of the scenery	5
Trail condition and maintenance	19
Urban growth near the trail	18
Trail uses	3
TOTAL RESPONSES	88

**Misc Comments:**

(regarding organization and commercial events)

There are plenty of other trails to host events. For those who are through hiking/biking/riding, encountering an event can really change the experience. I have had to change plans after encountering events on the trail. I don't want to be there when events are happening. It's not why I use the AZ Trail.

I can think of 5 races off top of my head, using AZT. I think there should be a limit, per year, per segments. (illegible)

Guided hiking, biking, etc is different (and better) than commercial events!

*(regarding challenges facing the AZNST)*

Limit the amount of restrictions. Allow events, tours, etc.

Overuse! Please – no events! Loss of quiet.

Motorized trespass (including snowmobiles)

# Tucson, AZ

**Date:** August 15, 2017

**Location:** Hardesty Midtown Multi-Service Center

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## Public Attendees (26):

Gary Faulkenberry (Arizona State Parks and Trails)  
Chip Parfet (Oracle Dark Sky Committee)  
Shay Saucedo (Senator McCain's office)  
Max Dell Oliver (Representative O'Halleran's Office)  
Tim Colby (ATA)  
Robert Grey (ATA)  
Zach MacDonald (ATA)  
Larry Doyle (ATA)  
Bill Hatcher (ATA)  
Robin Barnes (ASARCO)  
James Stewert (ASARCO)  
Kathy Arnold (Hudbay)  
Jerry Bustamante (Hudbay)  
Bev Showalter (Pima Trails Association, County Line Riders)  
Kim Goodman (County Line Riders of Catalina)  
Steve Anderson (Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation)  
Sue Clark (Pima Trails Association)  
Kristin Terpening (Arizona Game and Fish Department)

Amanda Best (Westland Resources)

Sirena Dufault (Trails Inspire)

Leigh Anne Thrasher

Melanie Bell

Bob Pekarske

Tasha Pontifex

Chris Michalowski

Randy Lyle

## Federal Agency Attendees:

Laura White (USFS Trail Administrator)

Julie Molzahn (USFS Planner)

Francisco Mendoza (BLM Tucson Field Office)

June Lowery (BLM Gila District Office)

Doreen Ethelban (Coronado NF)

James Copeland (Coronado NF)

Adam Springer (Saguaro NP)

Leah McGinnis (Saguaro NP)

Ray O'Neil (Saguaro NP)

Libby Schaaf (Coronado National Memorial)

Mike Holt (Chiricahua National Monument)

## Exercise Results:



***What's your connection to the Arizona Trail?***

Mountain biking mule riding – tiger mine steward

Section-hikes & thru-hikes the trail, Trail Steward

Horse/mule riding & stewards Tiger Mine Trail Supporter!

Hiking + backpacking

Volunteer Trail Steward segment 7a

Day Hiker + 200 miles!!

Day hiker.

Hiker – thru-hike next year

***How frequently do you feel crowded when using the AZNST?***

Responses: 21

Avg: 8.7

***What do you think about the AZNST as a venue for organized or commercial events?***

Responses: 20

Avg: 5.8

***What do you see as the biggest long-term challenges facing the AZNST that can be address by the comprehensive plan?***

Tucson Responses – Biggest Challenges	
Energy and minerals projects	9
Utility projects such as pipelines	1
Forest management projects	2
Degradation of the scenery	0
Trail condition and maintenance	12
Urban growth near the trail	5
Trail uses	2
TOTAL RESPONSES	31

# Superior, AZ

**Date:** August 16, 2017

**Location:** Superior Chamber of Commerce

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## Public Attendees (26):

Bruce Odegaard (Sun City Hiking Club)

Paul Sullivan

Jeanne McGann

Barbara Linkins

Rosemary Borg

Wayne Sandale (Apache Junction Parks and Recreation)

Jay Schenzer (Rebuild Superior)

Phyllis Ralley (ATA)

Roger Smith (ATA)

Shawn Redfield (ATA)

Steve McClintock (Backcountry Horsemen)

Darryl Cross (Superstition Horsemen's Association)

John Rohan

Chip Wilson (Arizona Horse Council)

Cameo Flood

Wyron Smith

Bruce Wittig

Lonnie Harcee

Fernando Shiply (ATA)

Kent Taylor (Pinal County)

M. Werre

Silvia Were

Pamela Dalton-Robago

Mila Besich-Lira (Superior)

Gerry Kaufhold

Debra Duerr

## Federal Agency Attendees:

Laura White (USFS Trail Administrator)

Francisco Mendoza (BLM Tucson Field Office)

June Lowery (BLM Gila District Office)

Bill Gibson (BLM State Office)

Mark Sando (Tonto NF)

Kelly Jardine (Tonto NF)

Pablo Burghard (Tonto NF)

## Exercise Results:

### ***What's your connection to the Arizona Trail?***

Superior trail advocate

Segment hiker

Mark trail goes through the Globe District

Segment 18a & 17b backcountry horsemen

Segment 20a steward

20+ year volunteer

Proud steward Passage 23 Mazatzal Divide!

Section 18A co-stewards – SHA-Superstition Horsemen's Association

Segment hiker. Love it.

The Legends of Superior Trails (love) Superior

Trail volunteer

Promoter for Kearny

Lost

Hiker, Miami –AZ

Lifelong resident of Superior!

Have done 200 miles will finish by end of 2019



***How frequently do you feel crowded when using the AZNST?***

Responses: 21

Avg: 7.61

***What do you think about the AZNST as a venue for organized or commercial events?***

Responses: 20

Avg: 5.25

***What do you see as the biggest long-term challenges facing the AZNST that can be address by the comprehensive plan?***

Superior Responses – Biggest Challenges	
Energy and minerals projects	12
Utility projects such as pipelines	1
Forest management projects	2
Degradation of the scenery	8
Trail condition and maintenance	13

Urban growth near the trail	7
Trail uses	4
TOTAL RESPONSES	47

### **Other Participant Notes:**

*(Regarding commercial or organized events)*

Mountain bike races are not well publicized – therefore, conflicts with hikers & equestrians occur

If requires a permit, ok. If a fundraising for a non-profit org, ok. But, not a profit organization. Also if not-for-profit org. Like a horse org having a ride + dinner at trailhead after ride.

## Tempe, AZ

**Date:** August 17, 2017

**Location:** Pyle Adult Recreation Center

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### **Public Attendees (26):**

Greg Gregory (ATA)  
Larry Snead (ATA)  
Rob Mason (ATA)  
Ambika Balasubramaniyan (ATA)  
Sallie McCutcheon (ATA)  
Susan Lagerman (ATA)  
Jan Hancock (ATA)  
John Mainieri (ATA)  
Terry Hoffman  
Don Pike (Friends of the Tonto National Forest)  
Steve McClintock (Backcountry Horsemen)  
Laurel Arndt (Sonoran Institute)  
Christine Vogt (ASCOT)  
Dallen Timothy (ASU)  
Mickey Rogers (Arizona State Parks and Trails)  
Suzanne Kinney (Arizona Mining Association)  
Denis Ryan  
Gerard Vick

Allan Zisner  
Gary Crockett  
John Bauer  
Christy Wulbrecht  
Kevin McGuire  
Lynn Ashby  
Cliff Tucker  
Skip Carvey

### **Federal Agency Attendees:**

Laura White (USFS Trail Administrator)  
Francisco Mendoza (BLM Tucson Field Office)  
Bill Gibson (BLM State Office)  
Gary Hanna (Tonto NF)  
Pablo Burghard (Tonto NF)  
Greg Schuster (Tonto NF)  
Kenna Belsky (Tonto NF)  
Beth Rumpza (Tonto NF)  
Sherry Plowman (NPS, Southern Arizona Office)  
Stephanie MacDonald (NPS, Southern Arizona Office)



## **Exercise Results:**

### ***What's your connection to the Arizona Trail?***

Lover of outdoors and its serenity

Trail steward – hiked 410 miles

This past spring completed 433 miles Mexico → Utah!

Working with communities in Copper Corridor to link towns and people to trail users

I plan to ride horseback the entire trail!

### ***How frequently do you feel crowded when using the AZNST?***

Responses: 16

Avg: 8.625

### ***What do you think about the AZNST as a venue for organized or commercial events?***

Responses: 20

Avg: 5.65

***What do you see as the biggest long-term challenges facing the AZNST that can be address by the comprehensive plan?***

Tempe Responses – Biggest Challenges	
Energy and minerals projects	9
Utility projects such as pipelines	0
Forest management projects	8
Degradation of the scenery	3
Trail condition and maintenance	19
Urban growth near the trail	1
Trail uses	7
TOTAL RESPONSES	47

## **Appendix A - Media Coverage**

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[http://azdailysun.com/news/local/arizona-trail-to-get-new-management-plan/article\\_cb0c6baa-8717-5d71-b4e4-d14371e20001.html](http://azdailysun.com/news/local/arizona-trail-to-get-new-management-plan/article_cb0c6baa-8717-5d71-b4e4-d14371e20001.html)

TOP STORY

## Arizona Trail to get new management plan

EMERY COWAN Sun Staff Reporter Aug 12, 2017



The Arizona Trail as it approaches the Verde River in Tonto National Forest.

US Forest Service/courtesy

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The 800-mile-long Arizona Trail that spans the length of the state is getting a new level of management.

It will come in the form of a comprehensive plan aimed at better protecting and preserving the trail's resources, whether they are located on federal, state, county, municipal or private land.

Federal agencies released an initial draft of the plan earlier this month and as a first step, are reaching out to the public for feedback.

Among the dozens of people who showed up to Flagstaff's public comment meeting on Thursday evening, three major concerns about the trail's future came to the fore: trail condition and maintenance, urban growth near the trail and nearby energy and minerals projects.

Right now, there aren't enough resources to maintain the trail, said Andrea Michaels, who lives part-time in Flagstaff and is a designated steward for part of the trail north of the San Francisco Peaks. Trail construction and maintenance rely largely on volunteers at this point, and it has become known as the state's largest volunteer project.

On other parts of the trail, nearby mining projects are forcing the route to be moved or are posing a threat of tailings being deposited near the trail, both of which were major concerns for Steve Chaffee. Chaffee, who has hiked the trail in both directions, said he also worries about overcrowding along the part of the route that passes through Grand Canyon National Park on the popular North Kaibab and South Kaibab trails.

"Every five minutes you had people saying, 'Hi how are you?'" Chaffee said. "It really diminished my experience because there were so many people down there."



A cyclist tours the Arizona Trail through an aspen grove on upper Hart Prairie.

Caroline Wilson/courtesy

Attendees at Thursday's meeting included bikers, runners, hikers and lots of Arizona Trail Association members, reflecting the trail's broad user base.

Scott Heinsius, the owner of Cosmic Cycles, was carrying his bike helmet as he looked over posters and maps on display. He said he decided to attend just to see what was going on with the trail. Standing beside him, Absolute Bikes General Manager Anthony Quintile spoke about the Arizona Trail's value in connecting many trails in Flagstaff's system and providing a wilderness-type experience for bikers, who aren't allowed in designated wilderness on the San Francisco Peaks.

The trail is also an important asset for Ian Torrence, who attended the meeting and is the director of the Flagstaff to Grand Canyon Stagecoach Line 100 Mile race, which follows the Arizona Trail. The new comprehensive plan will consider how to allow new special uses like trail races, which Torrence conceded is a “pretty sticky subject.”

Even with his background, Torrence said he supports limits on special use permits that would prevent events if they duplicate what’s already being done. At the same time, though, he said his event introduces people to the trail, brings awareness to its less-traveled parts and potentially creates new advocates for the trail in the long run.

While Torrence said he wants to see many parts of the trail stay wild, heavily used places like Aspen Corner on Snowbowl Road could use additional infrastructure like toilets and better signage.

## PLAN FEATURES

Federal officials acknowledged that Flagstaff residents have a unique relationship with the Arizona Trail as it passes right through the city. There’s also the fact that the single biggest chunk of trail is on the Coconino National Forest, said Adam Milnor, a planner with the National Park Service who is helping with the trail plan.

The trail, which was completed in 2011, is one of 11 congressionally designated national scenic trails nationwide. It's official name is the Arizona National Scenic Trail. With that designation comes a requirement for agencies to create a comprehensive trail plan.





Kathleen Jones at Fisher Point along the Arizona Trail above Walnut Canyon.

Courtesy/Rob Jones

The plan will guide everything from land use decisions within the trail corridor to trail reroutes to determinations of visitor capacity.

Included in the initial draft of the comprehensive plan is:

- A framework for locating or relocating segments of the trail. One specific priority is to reroute the trail where it shares an alignment with dirt roads so that hikers, bikers and equestrians aren't traveling alongside motorized vehicles, Milnor said.
- Establishment of a corridor that extends one-half mile on either side of the trail on federal lands that will be managed to benefit the Arizona Trail experience. The proposal would prohibit new energy or mineral-related operations to be located directly in that corridor, for example. It would also call for forest thinning projects slated for the trail corridor to be modified to protect the scenery for trail users, Milnor said.
- A list of certain side and connecting trails proposed for designation as part of the Arizona Trail system, which opens them up for more funding opportunities, said Laura White, trail administrator with the Forest Service.
- A process for estimating visitor capacity to determine how much use the trail can take before the resources become damaged or degraded or the user experience is compromised. It would also include suggestions for how to

mitigate trail crowding, like encouraging people to hike the trail at different times or access it from different locations. But the agencies are "a long way out from any sort of a limitation on use" Milnor said.

- Calls for working with local governments, landowners and other entities to maintain the trail corridor and natural character of the surrounding landscape. That could mean incorporating design features and mitigation into nearby projects that would preserve trail, White said.

## GOOD RESPONSE

Matt Nelson, who is the director of the Arizona Trail Association and was not at Thursday's meeting, said he is pleased that his organization has been given a voice in the planning process.

He called the plan's draft components "progressive" and said that most importantly, it better protects the trail.

"Up until now, without this in place, any land manager could entertain a project proposal without special protection for the trail," Nelson said. "Everybody has a different language they speak and a different style of management of a trail system. This comprehensive plan provides direction to everybody."

"This is something we have been waiting for for years," he said.

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Emery Cowan can be reached at (928) 556-2250 or [ecowan@azdailysun.com](mailto:ecowan@azdailysun.com)

**"Everybody has a different language they speak and a different style of management of a trail system. This comprehensive plan provides direction to everybody."**

**--Matt Nelson, director, Arizona Trail Association**

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Emery Cowan

Emery Cowan writes about science, health and the environment for the Arizona Daily Sun, covering everything from forest restoration to endangered species recovery efforts.



[http://www.paysonroundup.com/news/arizona-trail-plan-discussion/article\\_282d9122-fd4f-5eb9-bfb1-e603d8d1e385.html](http://www.paysonroundup.com/news/arizona-trail-plan-discussion/article_282d9122-fd4f-5eb9-bfb1-e603d8d1e385.html)

FEATURED

## Arizona Trail plan discussion

Aug 8, 2017 Updated 49 min ago



**The Sunflower Trail** runs along the middle of the Arizona Trail, which runs from Mexico to Utah.

Photo courtesy of Randy Cockrell

The Forest Service will host a public hearing to discuss development of a comprehensive plan for the Arizona National Scenic Trail. The meeting for Rim residents is from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 8 at Julia Randall Elementary School gym, 600 S. Green Valley Parkway, Payson.

The public meeting is an open house format with a short presentation on the plan at 6 p.m.

The comprehensive plan is being developed in partnership with the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Arizona State Parks, local governments, and the Arizona Trail Association. The plan will guide management of the trail for the next 15 to 20 years.

The Arizona National Scenic Trail stretches over 800 miles from Mexico to the Utah border. Thousands of hikers, runners, mountain bicyclists, and horseback riders enjoy the trail each year. It stretches through seven Arizona counties, four national forests, one state park, four National Park Service sites including Grand Canyon National Park, and two Bureau of Land Management units. The Arizona National Scenic Trail was added to the National Trails System by Congress in 2009. It is one of only 11 National Scenic Trails nationwide.



"This trail has been a community project from day one," said Laura White, Forest Service trail administrator.

"We hope supporters of the trail will take this opportunity to help us craft a long-term vision for its management and protection."

Topics covered at each meeting include trail management, connectivity with local communities, access for recreation, and long-term protection. Attendees will be able to review the preliminary Forest Service proposed action and provide feedback.

The meetings are scheduled during a 60-day comment period that began Aug. 1. Information on the Arizona National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Plan can be found at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/azt/land-resources-management/>

The National Trails System is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2018. More information can be found at:

<https://www.trails50.org/>

For more information on the Arizona National Scenic Trail, please contact Laura White at 520-388- 8328 or [laurawhite@fs.fed.us](mailto:laurawhite@fs.fed.us).

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Contact the reporter

[tmcquerrey@payson.com](mailto:tmcquerrey@payson.com)



**This seven-mile hike** along a portion of the Arizona Trail brought the group face to face with some apparently wild horses and burros.

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## Forest Service Seeks Input On Future Of The Arizona Trail

By [Stina Sieg](#)

Published: Thursday, August 17, 2017 - 7:25am

Updated: Thursday, August 17, 2017 - 4:01pm

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The U.S. Forest Service is looking for input on a long-distance trail that runs through the rugged center of the state. The Arizona Trail spans 800 miles, from Mexico to Utah.

The Arizona Trail was completed in 2011, and now the forest service is [creating a comprehensive plan](#) for its future.





(Photo by Stina Sieg - KJZZ)

The Arizona Trail is 800 miles long and cuts through the center of the state, heading from Mexico to Utah. This is in the northern section of the trail.



(Photo courtesy of The Arizona Trail Association)

Map of the Arizona Trail.

Arizona Trail executive director Matthew Nelson said the plan will help protect the trail from development by giving guidance to the various agencies that control the land the trail winds through. He said the trail was dreamed up by a Flagstaff teacher decades ago – and finally completed in 2011.

“It wasn’t a state or a federal project,” Nelson said. “And so, because it was really built and maintained by the citizens of Arizona, it’s incredibly important that we, as volunteers and trail users really help kind of guide the federal agency.”

He added that one of the beautiful things about the Arizona Trail is its solitude.

“When the trail was designed, the goal was to provide these wild Arizona experiences in parts of the state people might not visit otherwise,” Nelson said. “To keep it really far away from cities and even small communities.”

The forest service is taking input until October on a preliminary draft of the plan, called a public scoping document. A first draft is expected by the winter of 2018.

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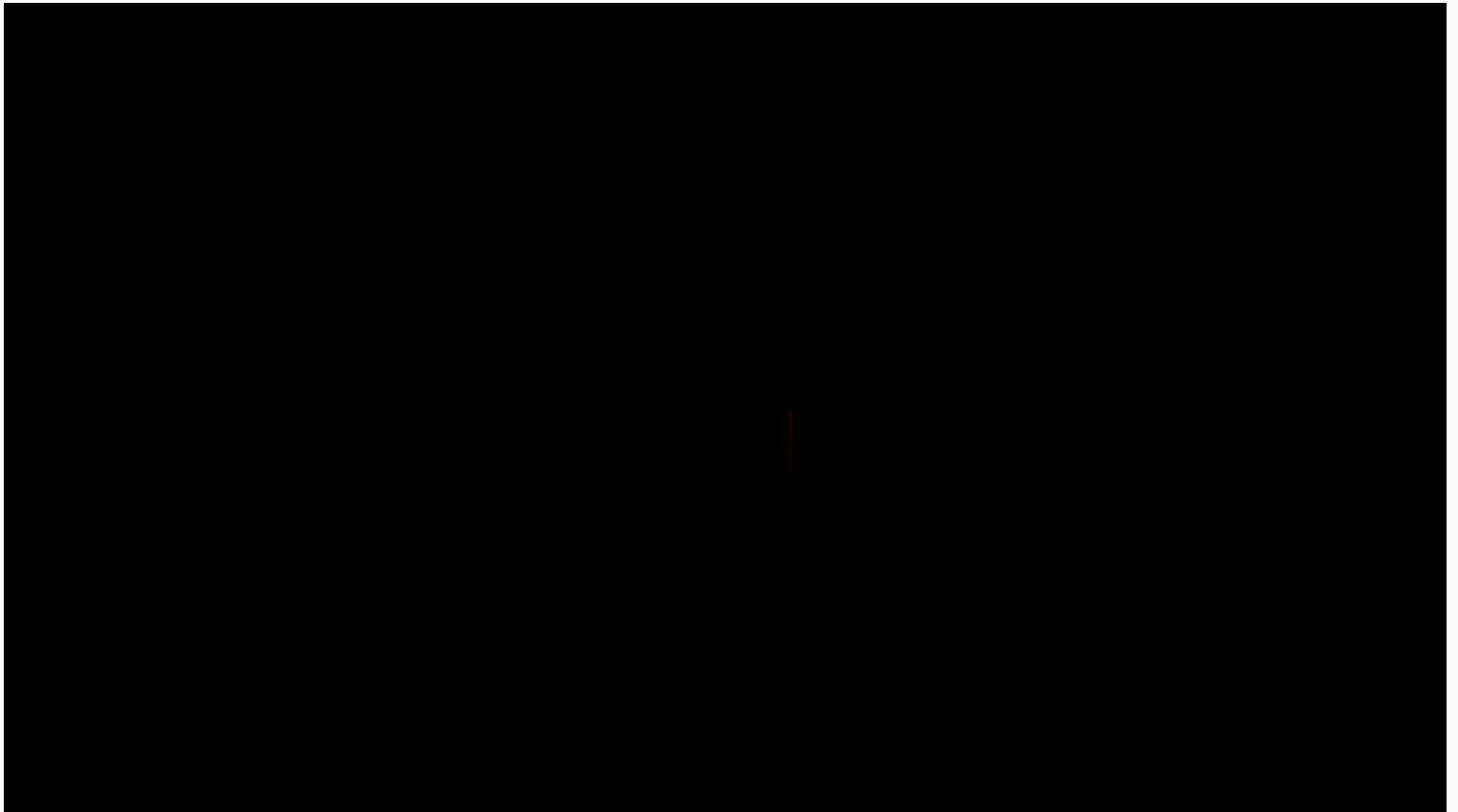




# Forest Service to host public meeting in Kanab for Arizona National Scenic Trail

Written by or for St. George News

July 15, 2017



Stock image. St. George News

**ALBUQUERQUE** – The U.S. Forest Service will host a public meeting in Kanab August 9 to discuss development of a comprehensive plan for the Arizona National Scenic Trail.

The comprehensive plan is being developed in partnership with the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Arizona State Parks, local governments and the Arizona Trail Association. The plan will guide management of the trail for the next 15 to 20 years.

The Arizona National Scenic Trail stretches over 800 miles from Mexico to the Utah border. Thousands of hikers, runners, mountain bicyclists and horseback riders utilize the trail each year. It stretches through seven Arizona counties, four National Forests, one state park, four National Park Service sites including Grand Canyon National Park and two Bureau

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## Forest Service seeking public input on Arizona Scenic Trail



Photo/U.S. Forest Service

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The Arizona National Scenic Trail stretches over 800 miles from Mexico to the Utah border.

By Williams-Grand Canyon News

Originally Published: July 18, 2017 10:48 a.m.

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ALBUQUERQUE — The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) will host six public meetings in August throughout Arizona to discuss development of a comprehensive plan for the Arizona National Scenic Trail.

The comprehensive plan is being developed in partnership with the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Arizona State Parks, local governments, and the Arizona Trail Association. The plan will guide management of the trail for the next 15 to 20 years.

The Arizona National Scenic Trail stretches over 800 miles from Mexico to the Utah border. Thousands of hikers, runners, mountain bicyclists, and horseback riders enjoy the trail each year. It stretches through seven Arizona counties, four National Forests, one state park, four National Park Service sites including Grand Canyon National Park, and two Bureau of Land Management units. The Arizona National Scenic Trail was added to the National Trails System by Congress in 2009. It is one of only 11 National Scenic Trails nationwide.

“This trail has been a community project from day one,” said Laura White, Forest Service Trail administrator. “We hope supporters of the trail will take this opportunity to help us craft a long-term vision for its management and protection.”

All public meetings are open house format and run from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. A short presentation on the plan will begin at 6 p.m. Meeting dates and locations are:

**Payson, Ariz. Aug. 8, 2017 Julia Randall Elementary School Gymnasium  
600 S Green Valley Pkwy.**

**Kanab, Utah Aug. 9, 2017 Kanab City Library Multipurpose Room 374 N  
Main St.**

**Flagstaff, Ariz. Aug. 10, 2017 Flagstaff Aquaplex Community Meeting  
Room A 1702 N. Fourth St.**

**Tucson, Ariz. Aug. 15, 2017 Patrick K. Hardesty Midtown Multi-Service  
Center 1100 S Alvernon Way**

**Superior, Ariz. Aug. 16, 2017 Superior Chamber of Commerce 165 Main  
St.**

**Tempe, Ariz. Aug. 17, 2017 Pyle Adult Education Center Multipurpose  
Room B 655 E Southern Ave.**

Topics covered at each meeting include trail management, connectivity with local communities, access for recreation, and long-term protection. Attendees will be able to review the preliminary Forest Service proposed action and

Volunteers rappel over South Rim to clean up the Canyon

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provide feedback.

The meetings are scheduled during a 60-day comment period that begin August 1.

More information on the Arizona National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Plan can be found at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/azt/land-resources-management/>.



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## Meetings scheduled on plan for Arizona National Scenic Trail



*The Associated Press*

*July 15, 2017 02:01 PM*

PHOENIX (AP) - Federal officials plan to hold public meetings next month on development of a comprehensive plan for the Arizona National Scenic Trail, a route used by hikers, runners, mountain cyclists and horseback riders.

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The trail stretches over 800 miles between the Utah line and the U.S.-Mexico border.

The Forest Service says the plan is being developed with federal agencies, the state park system, local governments and the Arizona Trail Association to guide management and protection of the trail for the next 15 to 20 years.

Meetings are planned Aug. 8 in Payson, Aug. 9 in Kanab, Utah, and Aug. 10 in Flagstaff. Others will be held Aug. 15 in Tucson, Aug. 16 in Superior and Aug. 17 in Tempe.

They're part of a 60-day comment period that begins Aug. 1.

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# Public meetings scheduled on plans for Arizona National Scenic Trail

Associated Press Published 5:00 p.m. MT July 15, 2017



Before hitting the Arizona's trails, consider these six tips for safety. Wochit



(Photo: Mike Conner)

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Federal officials plan to hold public meetings next month on development of a comprehensive plan for the Arizona National Scenic Trail, a route used by hikers, runners, mountain cyclists and horseback riders.

The trail is one of 11 national scenic trails and stretches over 800 miles between the Utah line and the U.S.-Mexico border.

"This trail has been a community project from day one," said Laura White, Forest Service trail administrator, in a news release. "We hope supporters of the trail will take this opportunity to help us craft a long-term vision for its management and protection."

The Forest Service says the plan is being developed with federal agencies, the state park system, local governments and the Arizona Trail Association to guide management and protection of the trail for the next 15 to 20 years.

All the meetings will run from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and are scheduled for Aug. 8 in Payson, Aug. 9 in Kanab, Utah, Aug. 10 in Flagstaff, Aug. 15 in Tucson, Aug. 16 in Superior and Aug. 17 in Tempe.

They're part of a 60-day comment period that begins Aug. 1.

More details available through the Arizona Trail Association's [website](#).

The Arizona Republic contributed to this article.

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# Officials seek input on new Arizona Trail plan

Posted:  
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Written By Nick VinZant [CONNECT](#)

PHOENIX (AP) - Federal officials plan to hold public meetings next month on development of a comprehensive plan for the Arizona National Scenic Trail, a route used by hikers, runners, mountain cyclists and horseback riders.



The trail stretches over 800 miles between the Utah line and the U.S.-Mexico border.

The Forest Service says the plan is being developed with federal agencies, the state park system, local governments and the Arizona Trail Association to guide management and protection of the trail for the next 15 to 20 years.

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They're part of a 60-day comment period that begins Aug. 1.

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