



March 28, 2019

Coconino National Forest
Attention: Fossil Creek CRMP
P.O. Box 20429
Sedona, AZ 86341

RE: Fossil Creek Draft Comprehensive Resource Management Plan (CRMP)
and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation (AZSFWC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on your Fossil Creek CRMP and EIS.

Conservation of wildlife resources upon all lands (except tribal lands) within Arizona, including those within the Coconino National Forest (CNF) and Fossil Creek in this discussion, is the public trust responsibility of the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) through authority of the Arizona Game & Fish Commission under Title 17 of the Arizona Revised Statutes. That responsibility requires active management of wildlife to ensure those resources are conserved for present and future generations.

AZSFWC would urge the CNF to not include anything in the CRMP that might diminish the AZGFD's ability to perform their wildlife management activities.

AZSFWC understands the CNF has worked closely with the AZGFD on many occasions, and would urge continued cooperation with AZGFD, including:

- Ensuring recreational access for fishing, hunting and wildlife related activities, like granting access for licensed hunters during the interim management of Fossil Creek with combinations to locked gates.
- Allowing AZGFD to pursue their management objectives for game, particularly concerning the possibility of locking the CNF gate off of Hwy 260.
- Ensuring AZGFD can engage in protecting public safety as needed.
- Minimizing any diminished fishing opportunities during the April to October permit requirement period.
- Allowing vehicle access for hunters as currently defined in the CNF's travel management plans.

AZSFWC letter to Coconino NF on Fossil Creek CRMP – 3-28-2019

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation
PO Box 75731 New River, AZ 85087

- Supporting the Blue Ribbon native-fish sport fishery located in the Middle Reach section of Fossil Creek where most people recreate, by allowing this section of the creek be made available for multiple use activities, particularly since it is outside of the wilderness area.

AZSFWC concurs with the AZGFD position that the Proposed Action (Alternative E, Enhanced Recreation Opportunities with Phased Implementation) provides a diverse range of recreation opportunities representing a good compromise between public access (including from Strawberry, AZ on FS Road 708), public safety and resource protection.

AZSFWC would encourage the CNF to continue the partnership with AZGFD when it comes to these planning efforts for Fossil Creek!

Thank you.

Yours in Conservation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Unmacht', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jim Unmacht
Executive Director

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation (AZSFWC) is a 501c-3 non-profit organization dedicated to wildlife conservation, habitat work, youth recruitment and retention, as well as educating sportsmen and women on issues important to their passions.

AZSFWC consists of 40 member, affiliate, and associate groups that reach across the spectrum of hunting, angling, shooting, outdoor recreation and businesses from all across Arizona. Our member groups represent in excess of 10,000 sportsmen and women from Arizona.