



File Code: 2350
Date: March 17, 2017

Dear Interested Public,

The Sandia Ranger District of the Cibola National Forest (NF) proposes to make improvements on National Forest System (NFS) trails as well as user-created trails (to be designated following improvements) in the areas near the Cienega Picnic Area. This analysis area is located on the eastern side of the Sandia Ranger District, east of Albuquerque, NM on the Cibola NF&G. The legal description of the area is Township 11 North, Range 5 East: Sections 22-23, 26-27 and 34.

The project area lies in Management Area (MA) 2, the Sandia Ranger District excluding the wilderness and military withdrawals, as allocated in the *1996 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the Cibola National Forests and Grasslands* (the *Plan*). MA-2 is managed for recreational opportunities and maintaining viable wildlife populations and ecosystem health. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum designation(s) within the project area, Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (~20%) and Roded Natural (~80%) emphasize natural appearance and low to moderate visitor encounters with low to subtle visitor controls that harmonize with the natural environment.

Need for Change

User-Created Trails

A small number of user-created trails (approximately 8-10 miles in total) exist immediately south of Armijo Trail (#222) in Bernalillo County, New Mexico. A number of trail segments are currently exhibiting high rates of soil loss/erosion due to improper location and/or design (including steep grade). Additionally, a number of trail segments of considerable length lead to adjacent privately owned land or lack connections or loop opportunities to make them relevant to an overall system of trails for use by the public.

National Forest System Trails

Similarly to the user-created trails, a number of segments of NFST's are exhibiting soil loss/erosion due to improper trail design. In one location, damage to a spring has occurred due to the close proximity of a trail.

Development of a system of designated trails in the area will allow for improved management of trail sustainability and experiences consistent with the ROS designation(s) resulting in improved user experiences and protection of natural and cultural resources.

Proposed Action

Repair, Development and Designation of User-Created Trails

Repair (including trail relocation) and develop (such as construction of trail connections) a number of user-created trails located primarily south of Armijo Trail (#222) and east of Faulty Trail (#195) (see Map #1)). Following improvement work, trails will be designated as multi-use, non-motorized National Forest System trails.



Repair (including relocation) of NFS Trails

Repair (to include relocation) of existing National Forest System trails including Armijo Trail (#222), Barts (#225), Canoncito (#150) and Cienega (#148) see Map 1)). Work will consist of relocation of a number of trail segments to improve trail sustainability by reducing trail grade and adding other design elements (such as outslope and undulation to improve drainage).

All trail work will be natural surfaced and adhere to USFS trail specifications (Designed Use – Pack and Saddle, Trail Class 2) with a target tread width of 18-24”. Work will be performed with hand-tools or a small trail machine and adhere to USFS design and construction standards. Trail segments to be closed will be rehabilitated to discourage further use and minimize further erosion/impacts to resources. Rehabilitation measures will include scarifying the trail, placing brush, installing erosion control features (such as check dams) and native vegetation.

Spring Protection

Take measures to protect the Armijo Spring (such as installation of informational signs, barriers and a remote drinker (for equestrian use)).

It is anticipated that a bulk of the trail construction and improvement work will be implemented starting in the summer of 2017 and lasting to 2018.

This proposal is consistent with and similar to the categories of action which may be excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS as described in 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(1).

Providing Input

We value your interest and ideas for management of the Cibola NF&NG. If you have specific concerns or comments on this proposal, titled Armijo Cienega Trail Improvements Project, please send them to me at the address listed above or on-line (e-mail) to: comments-southwestern-cibola-sandia@fs.fed.us. Although always welcome, responses submitted by March 31, 2017 would be most helpful.

Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency’s decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the requester is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within seven days.

For additional information about this proposal, please contact Crystal Powell or Kerry Wood at 505-281-3304.

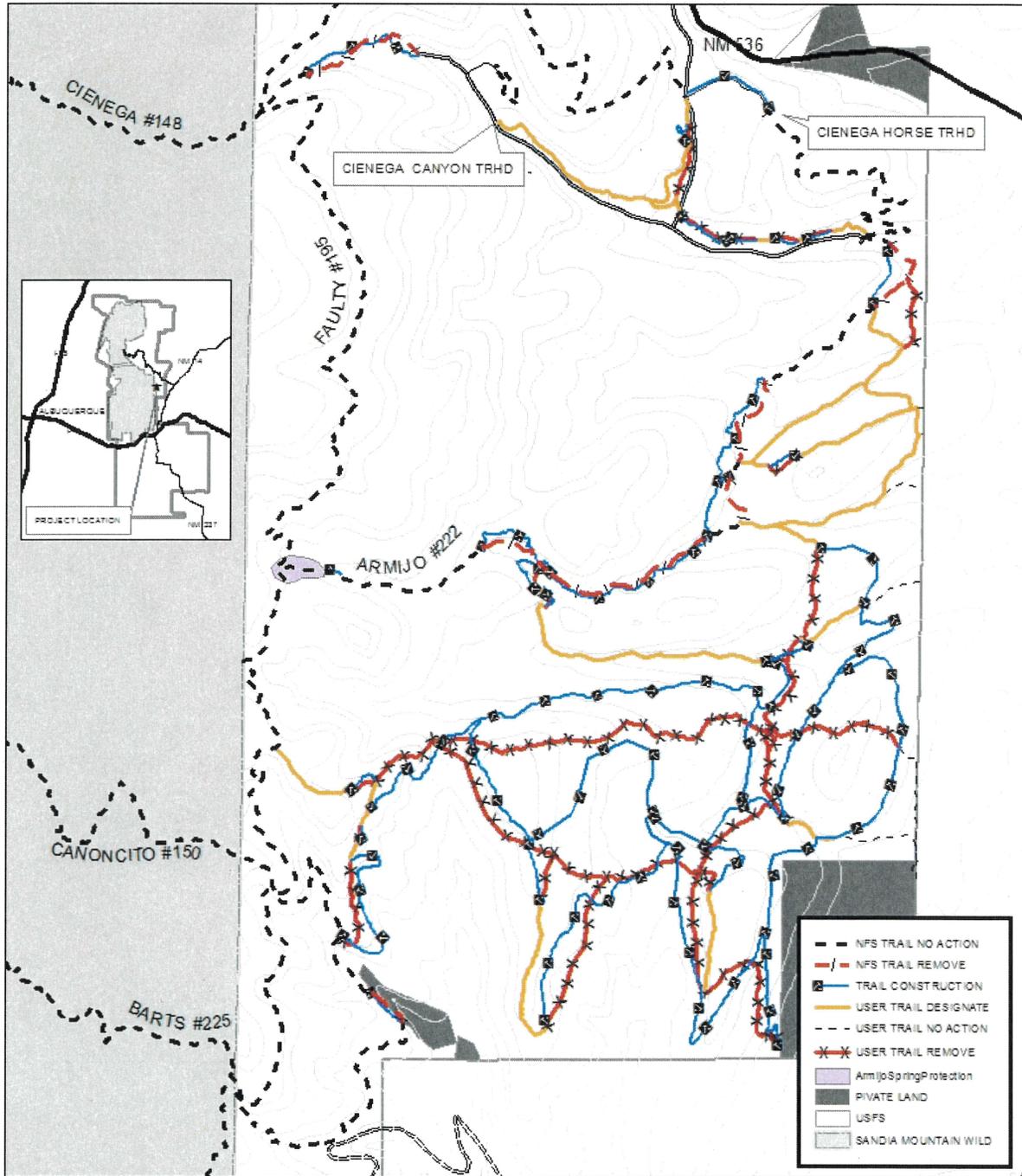
Thank you for your interest in the Sandia Ranger District and Cibola NF&G.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Crystal Powell', written over a horizontal line.

CRYSTAL POWELL
District Ranger

Map 1



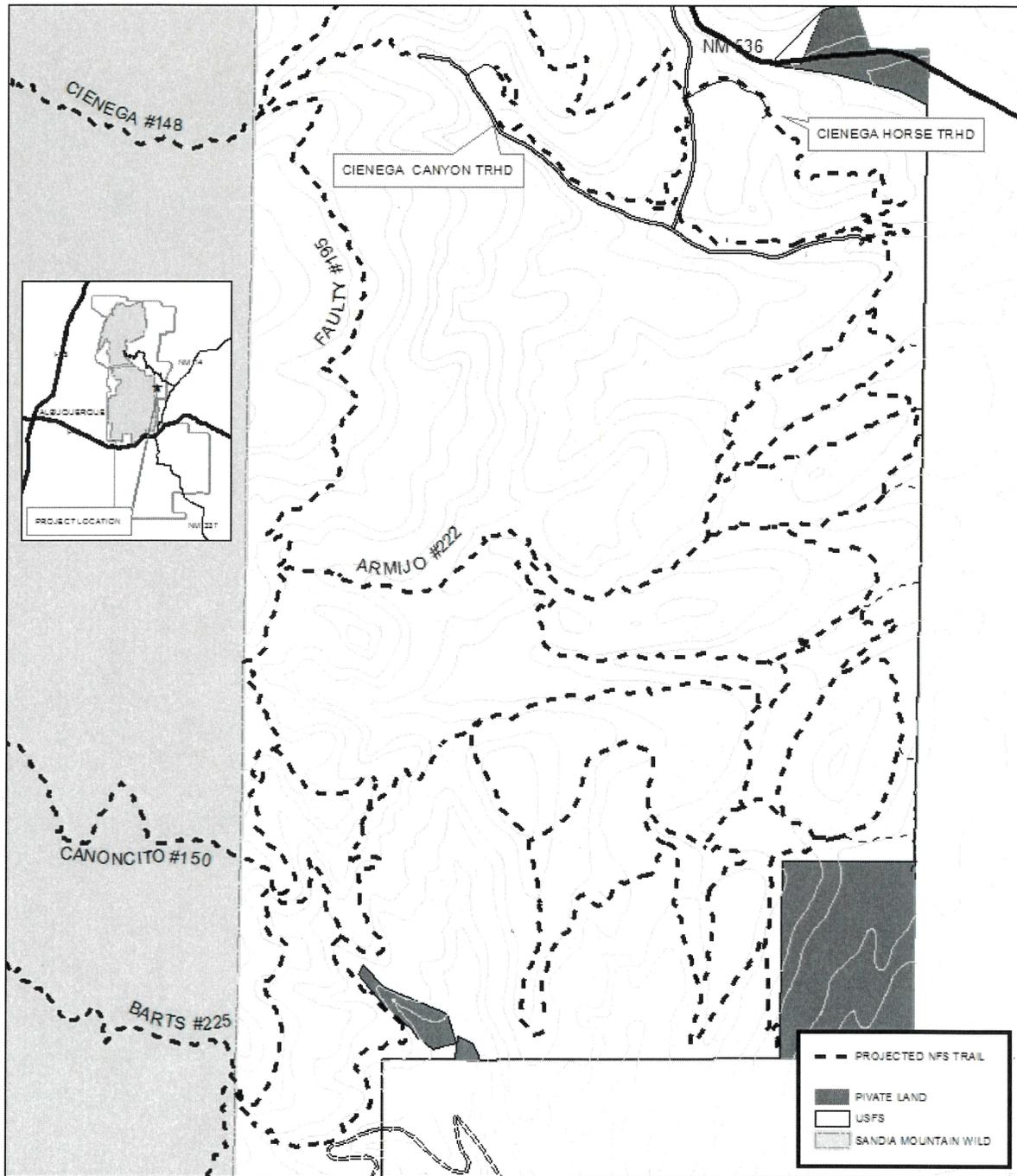
CIENEGA/ARMIJIO TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

MAP OF PROJECT ACTIVITES (MAP 1 of 2)



NAD 83
1:15,000

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CIENEGA/ARMIJO TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

MAP OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES (MAP 2 of 2)
(PROJECTED FINAL TRAILS)



NAD 83
1:15,000

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