

# Desired Conditions

Cibola National Forest and Grasslands  
Land and Resource Management Plan

# 2012 Planning Rule

- ▶ Five plan components
  - ▶ Desired Conditions (DCs)
  - ▶ Objectives
  - ▶ Guidelines
  - ▶ Suitability of Uses
  - ▶ Special Areas

# Desired Conditions

Desired conditions are the social, economic, and ecological attributes toward which management of the land and resources of the plan area is to be directed.

Desired conditions are aspirations and are not commitments or final decisions approving projects and activities, and may be achievable only over a long time period.

# Two kinds of Desired Conditions:

- ▶ Ecological
  - ▶ Technical and value based
- ▶ Social/Economic
  - ▶ Generally value based

# Ecological Desired Conditions

- ▶ Based on historic references conditions where information exists
- ▶ Where information doesn't exist, or where historic reference conditions are not relevant, they are based on measures of natural or desired function

# Social and Economic Desired Conditions

- ▶ Based on values such as maintaining desired uses
- ▶ Can be dependent on maintenance of ecological desired conditions

# Ecological Desired Conditions Example:

- ▶ Vegetation structure is in low departure from reference conditions as described in the Cibola assessment (USDA Forest Service 2015a). Desired seral state proportions are applied at the landscape scale where contributions from all seral stages and low overall departure from reference proportions are positive indicators of integrity (see Region 3 Seral State Proportions Supplement).
- ▶ Where healthy, large trees exist in forest and woodland vegetation types, they comprise the majority of the immediate foreground (up to 300 feet) of concern level 1 and 2 travelways (area with the most public concern for scenery). Some younger and mid-aged trees serve as replacement trees and as additional screening.
- ▶ Ecosystems contain a mosaic of vegetation conditions, densities, and structures. This mosaic (as described in vegetation-type-specific desired conditions) occurs at a variety of scales across landscapes and watersheds, reflecting the disturbance regimes that naturally affect the area. Natural ecosystem functions (energy flow, hydrologic and nutrient cycling) facilitate the shifting of plant communities, structure, and ages across the landscape over time.
- ▶ Vegetation is in good or very good conditions, according to indicators of tree mortality, road density, climate exposure, air pollution, catastrophic disturbance, wildfire potential, insect and pathogen risk, vegetation departure, and ecological process departure.

# Most Detailed Ecological Conditions: Forest Vegetation

- ▶ Landscape Scale (1,000 acres or more) DCs give proportions of forest area in different structural stages
- ▶ Mid-scale (10 to 1,000 acres) specifies stand structure and mixture of interspace versus forested areas
- ▶ Fine Scale (less than 10 acres) specifies tree spacing, understory and herbaceous vegetation components, and degree of disease permissible.



# Less Detailed Ecological DCs: Watersheds

- ▶ Watersheds are functioning properly and all indicators are rated as good according to the Watershed Condition Framework (Potyondy and Geier 2011) or similar protocol.
- ▶ Most watersheds support multiple uses (such as timber, cultural uses, traditional uses, human subsistence, recreation, and grazing) with no long-term decline in ecological conditions, although some watersheds are reserved to preserve ecological functions.
- ▶ Public water supplies are protected and water quality is maintained to provide a clean supply of water.

# Social and Economic Desired Conditions

## Example:

- ▶ Desired recreation opportunity spectrum settings serve as the desired conditions for recreation. Refer to figures 5 through 8, Desired Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, in appendix G. A variety of developed and dispersed recreation and tourism opportunities (such as camping, picnicking, hiking, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, equestrian use, driving for pleasure, climbing, and motorized recreation) are available for a diverse group of users commensurate with mapped desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes.
- ▶ Sustainable recreation opportunities are available commensurate with public interest, recreation resource capacity, and other natural and cultural resources.
- ▶ Conflicts among various recreation uses and other forest uses (such as grazing) are rare. There is minimal vandalism, theft, illegal activity, or resource damage on the national forest from recreation activities.
- ▶ The unique cultural, historical, and ecological resources of the Cibola are featured through recreation opportunities, conservation education, visitor information, and interpretation. These resources are readily available and encourage increased forest stewardship, ecological awareness, visitor orientation, and knowledge of recreation opportunities. Visitors are connected to the importance of the past, present, and future.
- ▶ Recreation opportunities enhance the economic, cultural, and social vitality and well-being of surrounding communities. Local communities are involved in partnerships and long-term relationships with stakeholders are fostered to facilitate and participate in the management of sustainable recreation on the national forest.

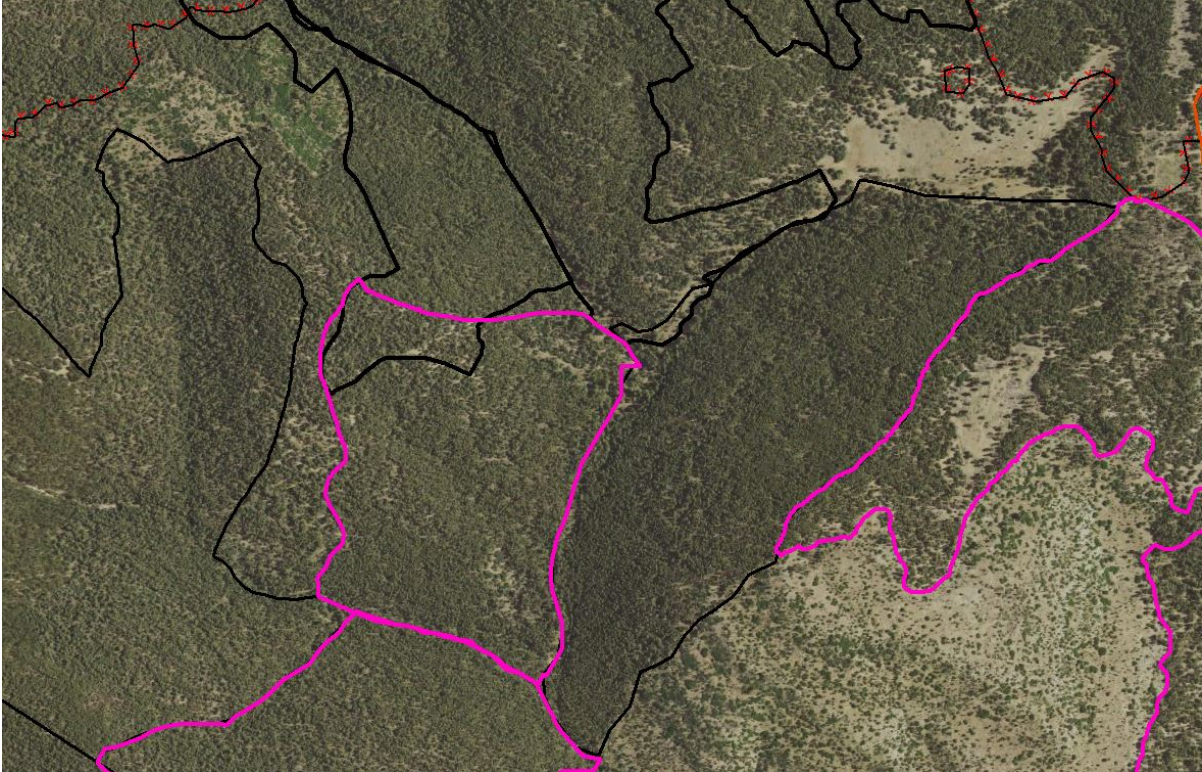
# How DCs Guide Projects

- ▶ DCs are not optional:
  - ▶ Where DCs are met, projects must maintain conditions
  - ▶ Where DCs are not met, the project must either move towards DCs, or at a minimum maintain existing departure from DCs
- ▶ Where one of these conditions can't be met, the plan must be amended
  - ▶ This typically happens where DCs are in conflict, e.g. meeting a mining DC which will result in not meeting ecological DCs.

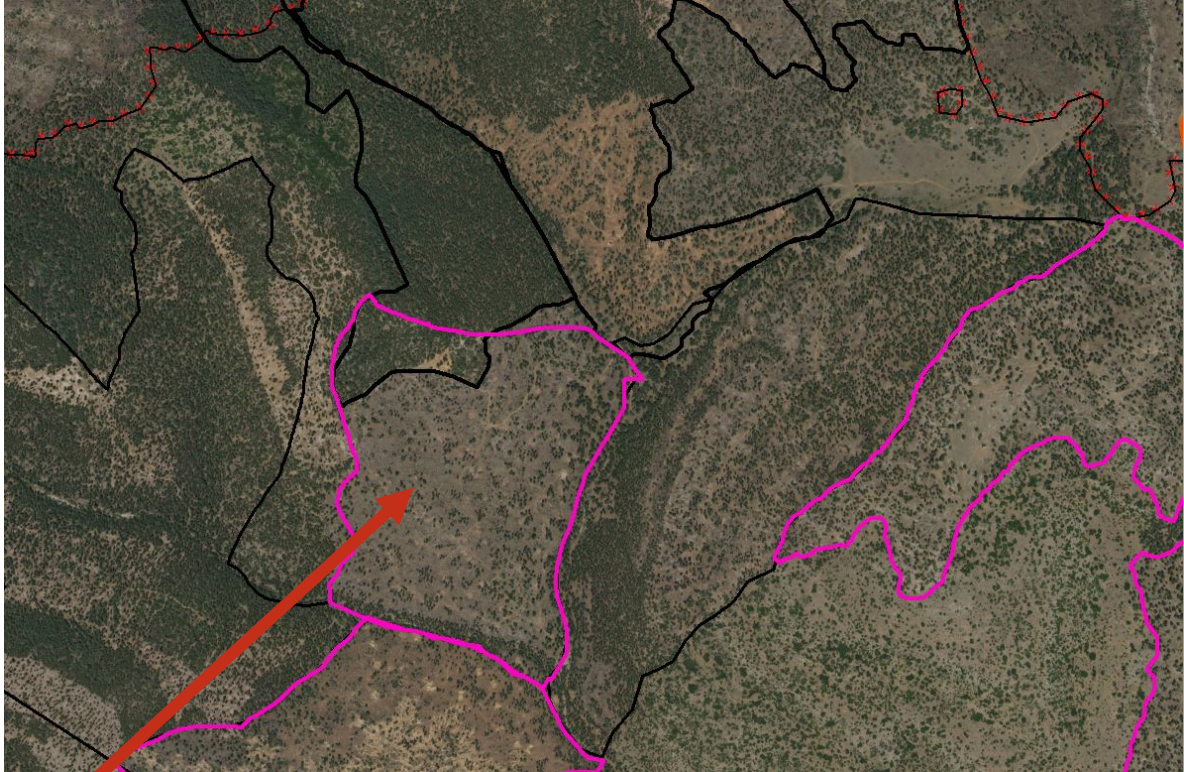
# Question / Discussion



Before Treatment



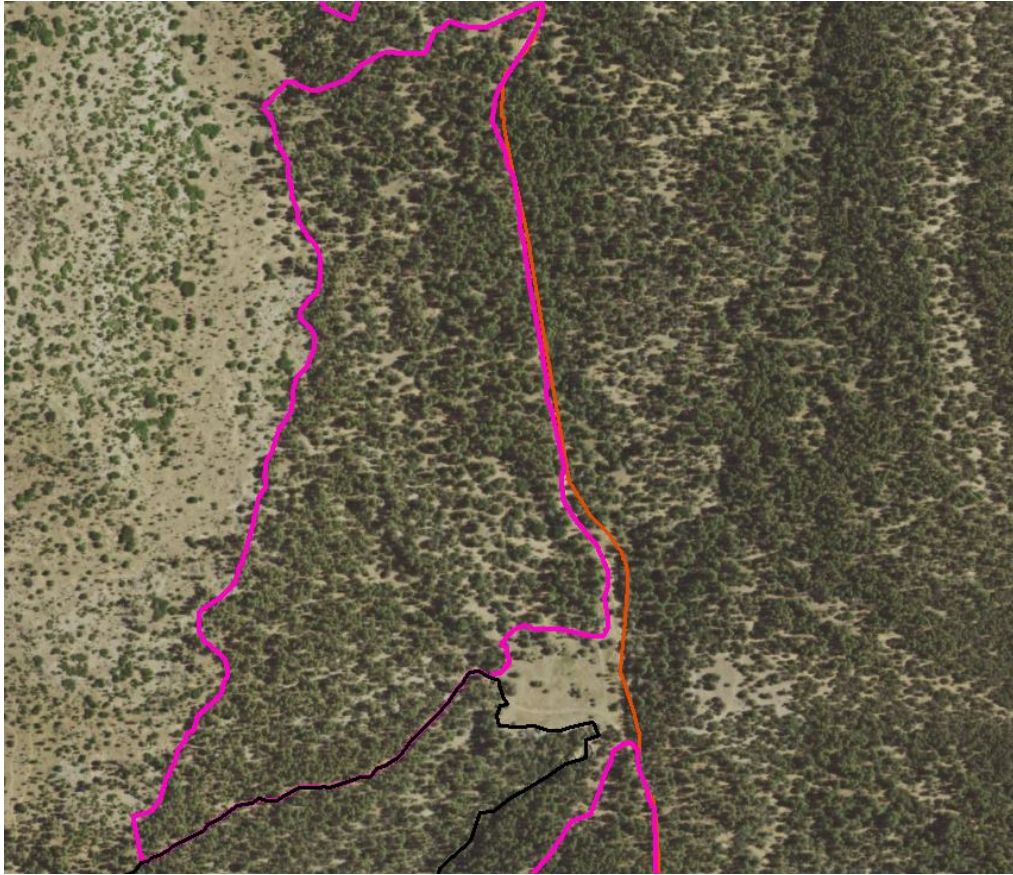
After Treatment



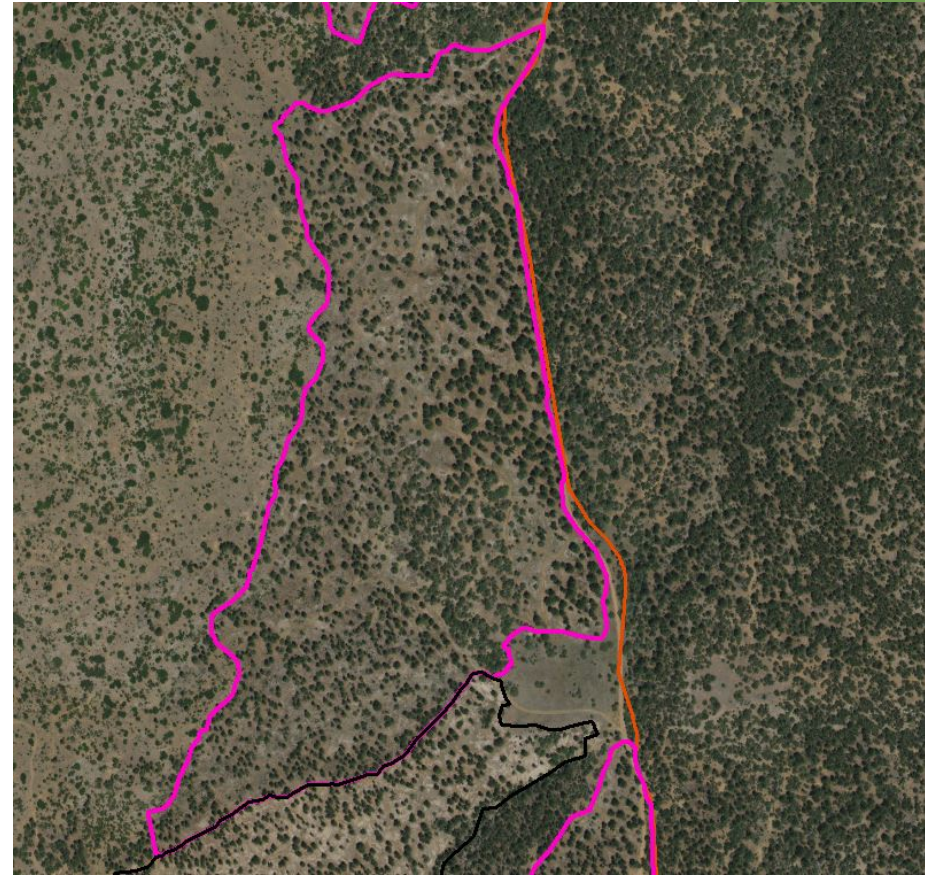
Low end of basal area range.



Before Treatment



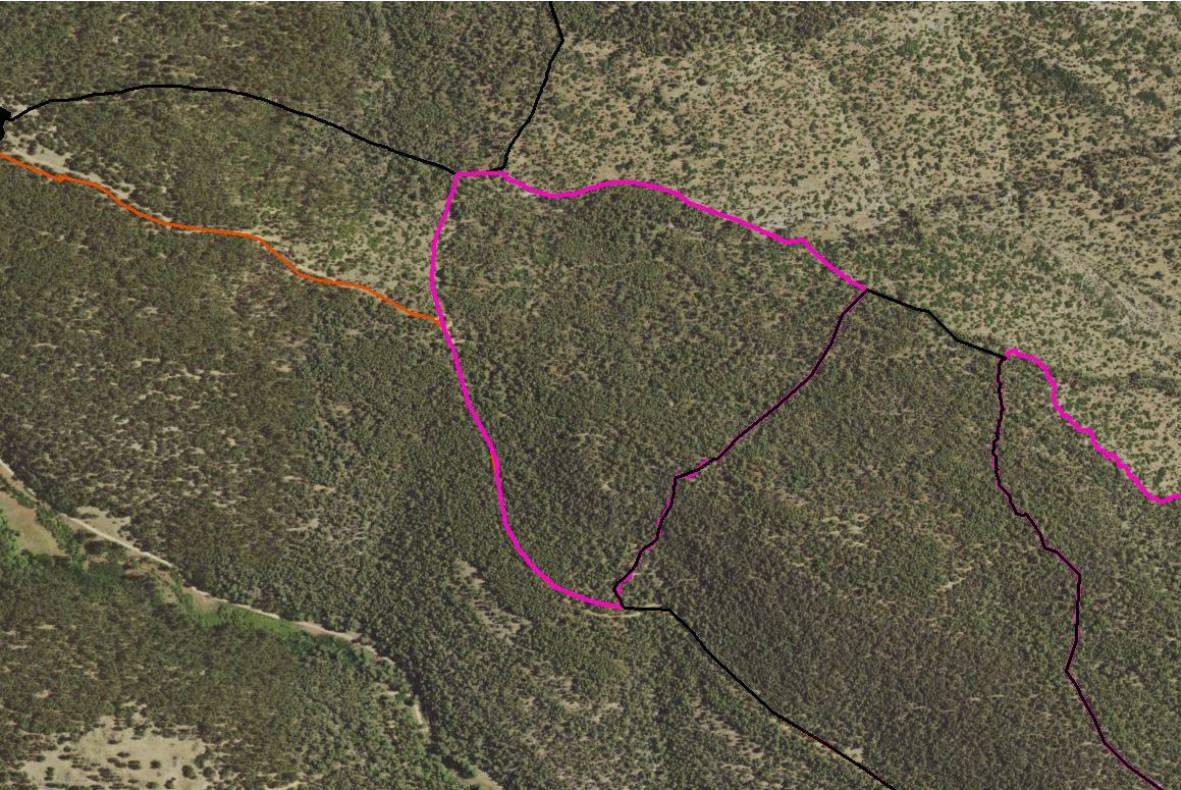
After Treatment



Mid-portion of basal area range.



Before Treatment



After Treatment

