



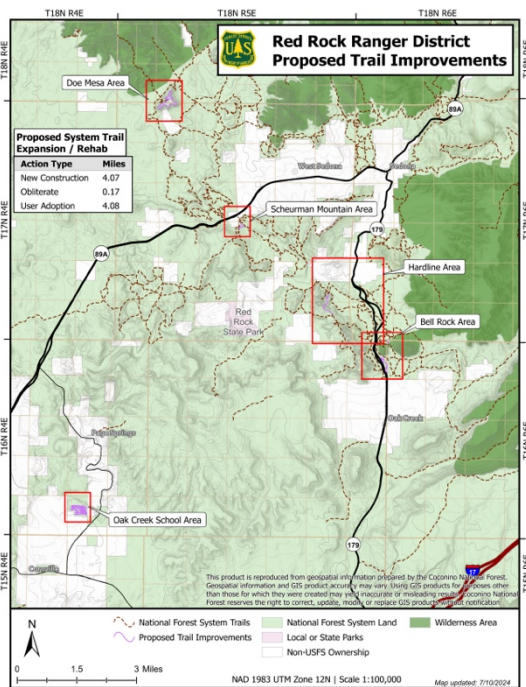
Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

COCONINO NATIONAL FOREST NEWS RELEASE

Public Affairs Officer Brady Smith
Dep. Public Affairs Officer Randi Shaffer
Media Line: (928) 224-8306

Flagstaff Ranger Station: (928) 526-0866
Mogollon Rim Ranger Station: (928) 477-2255
Red Rock Ranger Station: (928) 203-2900

Coconino National Forest approves construction of new Sedona-area trails



SEDONA, Ariz., Aug. 2, 2024 — Several miles of new trails are slated for construction in five different areas of the Coconino National Forest’s Red Rock Ranger District (RRRD) following public feedback given during a lengthy planning process.

“The first phase of this project includes trails that we think every type of user will appreciate,” said acting District Ranger Alex Schlueter. “Whether hiking, biking, or riding a horse, there’s a lot to look forward to.”

Work is planned to begin later this summer near both Cornville and Sedona, including the Bell Rock, Cornville Oak Creek Elementary School, Doe Mesa, Hardline Trail and Schuerman Mountain

areas.

This work will be conducted as part of the first phase of the [Red Rock Trails Access Plan](#), which was signed into effect yesterday.

The second phase of the project, which includes proposed expansions and improvements in the Turkey Creek area, is slated for an environmental analysis and an additional public comment period later this fall.

During the project's first phase, crews will construct approximately 4 miles of new non-motorized trail. Additionally, roughly 4 miles of user-created routes will be upgraded and adopted into the RRRD's official trail system.

These additions will sustainably concentrate use onto existing and maintained trail corridors, thus limiting impact to sensitive areas and protecting vegetation and fragile ecosystems.

New signage will be put in place following completion of the work, which is expected to be completed within two years.

Trail closures are not anticipated for any of the work, but should closures occur, they will be announced in advance via Coconino National Forest communication channels.

The Red Rock Trails Access Plan was created as part of a public trail planning process that concluded October of 2013. As part of that process, trail users in and around both Sedona and the Village of Oak Creek expressed desire for trail links and connectors to enhance the existing trail system, as well as the addition of high-interest user-created routes.

The project was released for public comment in November 2023. Multiple issues were raised, including trail density and trail design, and are addressed in a response to comments section found in the decision memo document.

Other public comments related to the Turkey Creek area included concerns about a closure of equestrian use in some areas and issues associated with traffic and parking. These are currently being considered by forest staff and will be resolved or addressed in the proposal and decision for the second phase of the project.

"Sedona Red Rock Trail Fund, Wheel Fun, Verde Valley Cyclist Coalition, Friends of the Forest, and others have all expressed interest in assisting with project implementation, which really shows the huge support we have in the community for trails," Schlueter said. "This decision has been a long time coming, and we're excited to implement it alongside our partners."

The trail expansions will add to the existing 300 miles of authorized trails on the RRRD, which are used annually by an estimated 3 million people.

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