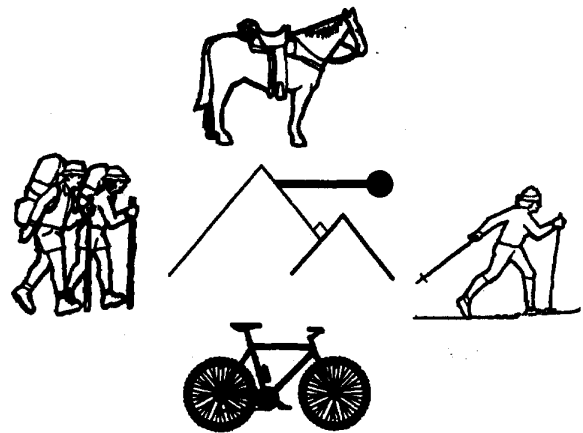


1994 Arizona Statewide
Comprehensive Outdoor
Recreation Plan



1994
Arizona
State
Trails
Plan



1994 ARIZONA STATE, TRAILS PLAN

A Component of the Arizona Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan



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A VISION FOR ARIZONA'S TRAILS

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Introduction

In Arizona, trails have been used by many peoples for centuries spanning historic and prehistoric times. Native Americans used trails or routes to trade with other tribes and for hunting and gathering. In the 1500's, Spanish explorers such as Coronado used many of the same trails for the search of the Seven Cities of Gold. In 1774, Captain Juan Bautista de Anza, commander of the small presidio of Tubac, created an overland route that lead from New Spain to what we know today as the San Francisco Bay area. In the 1800's, trails, such as, the Overland Road, Beale Wagon Road, General Crook Trail, and Butterfield Stage Route played major roles in Arizona's early history. By the late 1800's, trails serving miners and tourists into the Grand Canyon were constructed using routes originally established by Native Americans. Many of these early engineering achievements are still used today.

In the early 1900's, the newly formed U.S. Forest Service began to construct hundreds of miles of trails for wildland fire suppression, timber harvesting, and range management. During the Great Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps built many more miles of trails on Federal lands, this time for recreation. In the 1960's, trail construction boomed again as *Mission 66* initiatives with the National Park Service and *Operations Outdoors* initiatives with the U.S. Forest Service called for an increase in recreation opportunities. Budgets for constructing and maintaining trails grew during the 1970's, when demand for trail resources was high. High demand from trail users, combined with dramatically reduced budgets, brought challenging times for trail managers during the 1980's. The 1990's have seen an increase in new trail construction and trail-related facilities since funding sources such as the Arizona Heritage Fund became available. In addition, an increased interest in trails from the trail users is evident.

To complement the varied trail resources in Arizona, the Arizona State Trails Program (see Chapter 8: "The State Trails Program") began in 1972, with the formation of an advisory committee to the Arizona State Parks Board called the Arizona Hiking and Equestrian Trails Committee (AHETC). The Arizona Hiking and Equestrian Trails Committee changed its name in 1992, and is now called the Arizona State Committee on Trails, or ASCOT for short.

The State Trails Program has proved to be an integral part of Arizona State Parks. In 1976 Arizona State Parks began providing staff support, and in 1986, hired the first full-time State Trails Coordinator. In the same year, the Arizona Outdoor Recreation Coordinating Commission recommended that the State complete an Arizona Trails Plan as a supplement to the overall Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Three years later, the first Arizona Trails Plan was published. An issue-oriented action plan, it included a comprehensive inventory of the State's trails and identified more than 5,000 miles of non-motorized trails. Also in 1989, the State Legislature passed the Arizona Trails Act which requires the State to complete a trails plan every five years. Many goals of the 1989 Arizona Trails Plan have been accomplished (see page 2).

Many major trail issues are evident in Arizona, some locally, and many others on a statewide basis. This plan is designed to introduce trail managers, planners, users, and enthusiasts to the diversity of today's trail programs and trail issues, to actions to resolve these trail issues, and provide useful trails information.

This plan focuses specifically on Arizona's non-motorized trail programs and issues. The motorized trail programs, issues, goals, funding, and recommendations, are being addressed extensively in the *Arizona Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Plan*. For more information on this plan, contact the Arizona Off-Highway Vehicle Coordinator at (602) 542-4662.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE THE 1989 ARIZONA STATE TRAILS PLAN

Many accomplishments from the 1989 Arizona State Trails Plan - Action Plan are visible. These include actions that are being implemented by a specific participant **or** on a statewide basis. These also include tasks that are indirectly related to specific actions. The following accomplishments are a few of the many tasks that are seeing progress or have been accomplished:

- The development of the *Sharing the Trail!* brochure
- The development of the "In Their Shoes" Multi-Use Video
- The development of the *Arizona State Parks Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance Guidelines*
- The passage of the Arizona Trails Act
- The expansion of the Arizona State Trails System
- The development of the 3rd edition of the *Arizona State Trails Guide*
- The coordination of an Arizona Rails-To-Trails Workshop
- The coordination of two State Trails Conferences
- The development of the *Trail Use Policy* with the Arizona Bicycle Task Force and the Arizona State Committee on Trails
- The passage of the Arizona Heritage Fund Initiative
- The establishment of guidelines and priorities for the Arizona Heritage Trails Fund Grants program
- The publishing of the *Public Trail Access: A Guide to the Protection of Arizona's Trails* handbook
- The research of selected historic trails in Arizona
- The development of the Intergovernmental Agreement for the coordination of the Arizona Trail

Many of the above accomplishments are described in further detail in Chapter 8: "The State Trails Program."

Chapter 1: The Planning Process

PRELIMINARY STAGE

The development of the 1994 Arizona State Trails Plan was made possible in part through the Arizona Heritage Trails Fund Grants program. Unobligated funds from the competitive grants program the first year, were used in 1992 to fund a two-year limited, full-time, Trails Planner position in the Resource Stewardship Section of Arizona State Parks to produce the Trails Plan and the 3rd Edition of the State Trails Guide. Also in 1992, a 14-member Trails Plan Core Group was established to represent a diversity of trail interests in Arizona. The Core Group represented the various types of trail users, trail managing agencies, recreation planners, and academic, rural, urban, disabled, and historic interests: Its task was to help create an action plan to address the issues affecting Arizona's trails. The Core Group decided that the 1994 Arizona Trails Plan should include a detailed, issue-oriented action plan, and should serve as a clearinghouse of information on funding, trail resources, trail management programs, and trail uses, while still maintaining a "user-friendly" format. Significant discussion took place to determine the process (Figure 1-1), and develop criteria for the Trail User and Trail Manager Questionnaires, and public workshops.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

At an early stage, the public was invited to participate in the trails plan process. Public workshops were conducted in Kingman, Yuma, Prescott, Tucson, Sierra Vista, Flagstaff, Pinetop-Lakeside, and Scottsdale. The focus was to identify important trail issues for each region and for the State. These meetings brought hundreds of trail issues to light (Appendix A).

A Trail User Questionnaire (Appendix B) was developed to allow citizens to identify trail issues. The questionnaire also contained questions about types and amount of trail use, benefits of trail use, and involvement with trails. A total of 950 packets were sent to a mailing list that consisted of individual trail users, more than 100 recreation and conservation-oriented organizations, various businesses, trail planners and managers, and trail advocacy groups throughout Arizona.

Organizations were asked to duplicate and distribute the questionnaire and encourage their members to participate. Many new trail issues such as loss of access, lack of maintenance, and overuse, were identified in the 440 questionnaires that were returned (Appendix C).

AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Obtaining information about trail issues and programs from Arizona's trail managing agencies was an important part of the planning process. A separate Trail Provider Questionnaire (Appendix D) was developed and mailed to 55 agencies that manage trails. Approximately 35 agencies responded with many trail issues requiring attention. Managers expressed concerns about recreation trends, priorities for funding, and projected trail projects. The Trails Planner met with many of the trail managers to poll them further about their programs and issues (Appendix E), and also conducted telephone surveys with many other trail managers.

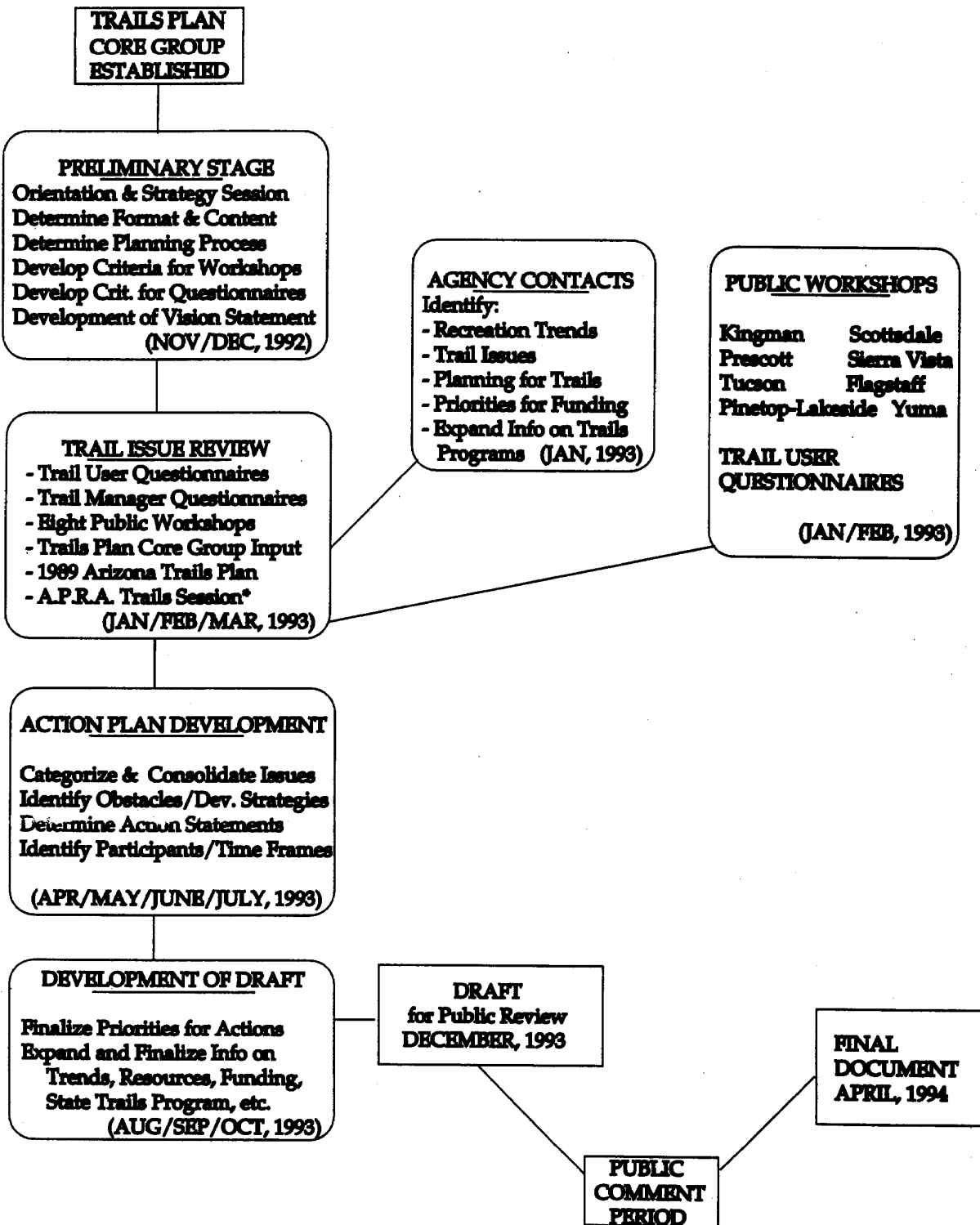
ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Development of an action plan took place in stages. Besides the information gathered from the questionnaires, many trail issues were identified at a 1992 Arizona Parks and Recreation Association conference session (Appendix F). A review of the 1989 Arizona Trails Plan identified many more trail issues, and the Trails Plan Core Group, representing their areas of expertise, added even more trail issues. During six work sessions that followed the preliminary meetings, the Trails Plan Core Group reviewed hundreds of trail issues gathered from the public involvement process.

The first Core Group work session categorized and consolidated the issues. Thirteen major trail categories were developed, and under each category, six to eight key concepts were developed. Issues were grouped under these headings.

This process continued during the second and third work sessions where participants identified obstacles for each major trail issue and developed strategies to remove these obstacles. The fourth and fifth work sessions created detailed action statements to address all issues. All agencies and individuals with a stake in resolving particular issues were identified, listed, and assigned to each action. A time frame for completing each action was established. Finally, the Core Group attached high, medium, or low priority ratings to each of the actions (see Chapter 6: "The Action Plan").

PROCESS DIAGRAM



Chapter 2: Arizona's Trail Resources

TRAIL DEFINITION

Defining the word "trail" can be challenging. To some recreationists, it is the primitive route in a designated wilderness that receives little use or maintenance. To others, it is the heavily used, urban paved pathway used by bicyclists and in-line skaters. Even though some users make a distinction between "primitive road" and "trail" or "single-track trail" and "double-track trail," for the purpose of this trails plan, we shall define "trail" as *a linear corridor that is protected and is accessible to the public for non-motorized recreation or transportation.*

TRAIL SETTINGS

Trails in Arizona are diverse by nature. They range from the almost non-existent North Bass Trail of Grand Canyon National Park in a primitive setting, to the paved Scottsdale Indian Bend Wash MultiUse Path in an urban setting. Trails or trail networks in Arizona are also abundant. Arizona has almost 100 wilderness areas, containing thousands of miles of trails, each with a different setting. In addition, with the development of long distance trails in Arizona, many trail networks will become interconnected allowing the user to experience multiple settings.

The settings in which Arizona's trails are found are very diverse. To determine a trail setting, a variety of methods can be used. One is the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), developed by the U.S. Forest Service to match user expectations with resources. It is used extensively by Federal land managing agencies, and provides a classification that can easily apply to the whole State. This involves looking closely at a matrix of the seven ROS "setting indicators" and six major land use classifications as components of the trail setting (U.S. Forest Service, 1990).

The ROS setting indicators include the following:

- **ACCESS**

This indicator includes type and mode of travel. Opportunities for solitude; risk, and challenge are varied. Accessibility for disabled recreationists is often addressed using the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum.

- **REMOTENESS**

This indicator refers to the extent to which individuals perceive themselves removed from the sights and sounds of human activity.

- **SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS (SOCIAL SETTING)**

This indicator refers to the number and type of recreationists encountered. Opportunities for solitude or social interaction are measured for the setting.

- **VISITOR MANAGEMENT (MANAGERIAL)**

This indicator includes the degree to which the visitors are regulated and controlled, and the level of information and services provided for visitor enjoyment.

- **FACILITIES AND SITE MANAGEMENT**

This indicator refers to the level of site development. The setting is evaluated on whether a high degree of development occurs or whether a "natural" setting can be found.

- **VISITOR IMPACTS**

This indicator refers to the impacts of visitor use on the environment. The setting is evaluated on the amount of change (from visitor use) that will be allowed and which actions will be appropriate for management.

- **NATURALNESS (SETTING)**

This indicator refers to the degree of naturalness in a setting as it affects psychological outcomes associated with enjoying nature.

These setting indicators used with the following six classifications of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, can offer a framework for understanding user desires with trail opportunities.

- **PRIMITIVE**

This area is characterized by an unmodified natural environment where interaction between users is very low and evidence of other users is minimal. The area is managed to be essentially free from evidence of man induced restrictions and controls.