

# Making Public Lands Public

Enhancing Hunter & Other Recreational Access to Federal Public Lands



OVERVIEW



► *These are typical scenes when trying to access Federal public lands.*

## SUMMARY

The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) comprising the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) request \$1,832,000 be made available to improve hunter and other recreational access to 197,742 acres of Federal land. The cost to open public lands to the public is less than \$10 an acre.

## THE ROUNDTABLE

The Federal Lands Hunting and Shooting Sports Roundtable (Roundtable) was created through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by 40 NGOs that comprise the AWCP, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The Roundtable was created to improve partnership efforts between the agencies and the NGOs to address issues impacting access to Federal lands for hunting and shooting sports activities.

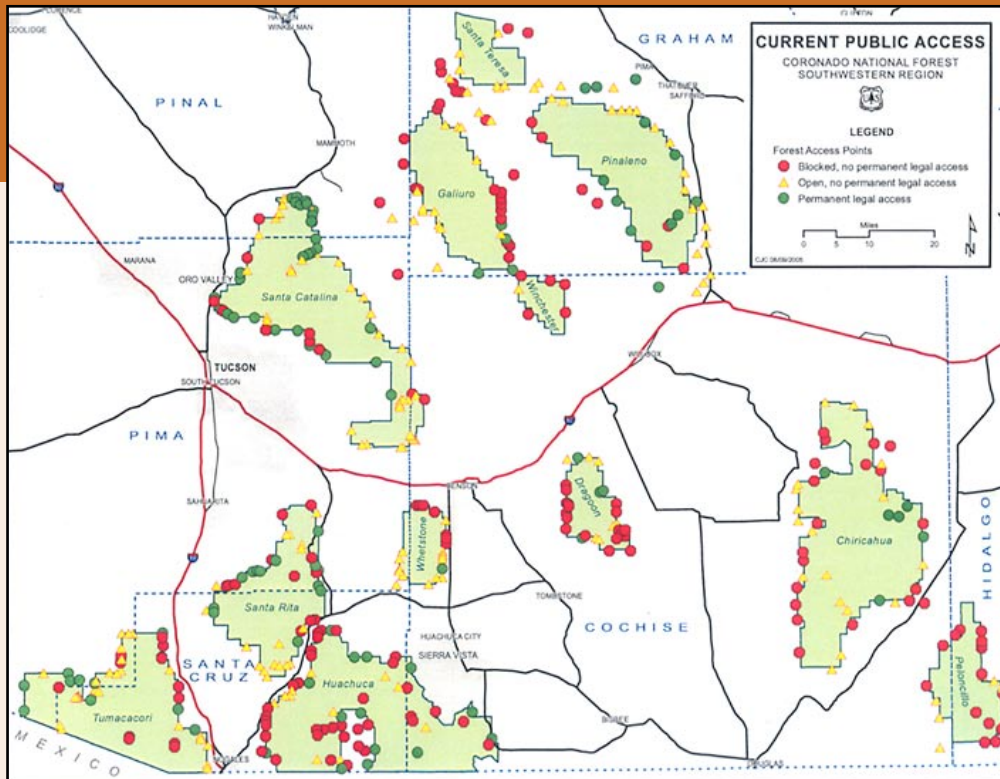
## THE ISSUE

Federal public lands are an important destination for many Americans including hunters. Nearly

half of all hunters conduct a portion of their hunting activity on these lands. However, numerous reports verify access to Federal land is problematic in a number of areas. In fact, a General Accounting Office (GAO) report concluded that more than 50 million acres of BLM and USFS land have inadequate access. Lack of access to hunting lands is cited as a primary reason that hunters stop participating in this traditional sport.

## THE PROCESS

To identify projects that will improve public access in general and hunter access in particular, the Roundtable worked with the USFS and BLM to issue a voluntary Request for Proposals to all agency field offices seeking quality projects that have a high probability of success. This effort reflected the direction given in Executive Order 13443, Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation, and was subsequently included as an action item in the Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Plan that was a product of the Executive Order. This request resulted in 51 proposals.



► Blocked access to Federal lands as illustrated by the Coronado National Forest, Arizona.

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### Enhancing Hunter & Other Recreational Access to Federal Public Lands

The USFS projects will improve access to 146,462 acres at a cost of \$1,383,000. Improved public access would be achieved in the following five states:

- Arizona
- Montana
- New Mexico
- Virginia
- Washington

The BLM projects will improve access to 51,280 acres at a cost of \$449,000. Improved public access would be achieved in the following four states:

- Arizona
- New Mexico
- Utah

### PROJECT SELECTION

The 51 proposals were reviewed by representatives from the NGO community, BLM and USFS. Proposals were reviewed to identify quality projects that can be completed quickly once funding is secured. Successful completion of these projects will act as a springboard for further efforts.

*The proposals were evaluated to determine priority projects based on the following guidelines:*

- Willing landowners
- Significant acreage of improved access
- Good relative value (cost/acre accessed)
- Relatively simple transaction
- Access to quality hunting areas
- Provides additional recreational opportunities

### PRIORITY PROJECTS

Of the 51 proposals submitted, 7 USFS and 6 BLM proposals were identified as priority projects to be the focal point of a national collaborative effort among the AWCP organizations to secure funding. Combined, these projects will improve access to Federal lands on 197,742 acres at a cost of only \$9.26 per acre. This is a tremendous bargain considering the cost of acquiring new public lands is hundreds to thousands of dollars per acre. The total cost to fund these priority projects is \$1,832,000.



### CONTACTS

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