

Lakes and Rivers Management Area (LRMA)

The purpose of the Lakes and Rivers Management Area is to prioritize and manage high-use developed and dispersed recreational opportunities in and around the lakes and major rivers of the Tonto National Forest. The management area consists of the areas one quarter mile around Roosevelt Lake, Apache Lake, Canyon Lake, Saguaro Lake, Horseshoe Lake, Bartlett Lake, the Verde River, and the Lower Salt River. Four Peaks Wilderness and Three Bar Research Natural Area are not included in this management area (Figure A - 8 in appendix A). This management area is removed from designated wilderness and proposed research natural areas. It provides additional guidance to sustain and promote the high-use and enhanced recreation in the area.

The lakes provide recreation opportunities such as boating, fishing, picnicking, swimming, and camping. The Lower Salt River provides opportunities for tubing, fishing, picnicking, rafting, kayaking and can attract 7,000 recreationists on a busy day (USDA Forest Service 2016). The Verde River provides swimming, picnicking, and kayaking opportunities. Most access and facilities in these areas are highly developed, including campgrounds, picnic sites, boat launches, fishing piers, and paved parking lots.

Fees are charged at most developed recreation sites in this area under the Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act. Fees have been charged here since 1996. The current fee system is a combination of off-site vendor sales and on-site fee machine sales. There are many special use permits issued for marinas, resorts, and shuttle services that provide additional recreation opportunities and services to visitors.

Much of the land around the lakes and rivers within this management area is withdrawn from “entry” for irrigation purposes. These “reclamation withdrawals” restrict the ability to occupy, or use the land (e.g., mining and homesteading) in a way that would conflict with the construction, operation, or maintenance of current or future reclamation projects. Reclamation Withdrawals on National Forests Section 3, Part 33 of the Reclamation Act of 1902 (Chap. 1093, 32 STAT. 388) states “Reclamation withdrawals within the national forests are dominant, but until needed by the Reclamation Service, the lands will remain for administrative and protection purposes under control and direction of the Forest Service.”

Refer to the [Recreation](#), [Developed Recreation](#), [Dispersed Recreation](#), [Water-Based Recreation](#), [Wildlife-Related Recreation](#), [Special Uses](#), [Watersheds and Water Resources](#), [Riparian Areas](#), [Seeps, Springs, Wetlands, and Riparian Management Zones](#), and [Wildlife, Fish, and Plants](#) sections in Chapter 2. Forestwide Plan Direction and other sections in [Chapter 3. Management Areas Plan Direction](#) for additional applicable plan direction.

Refer to Figure A - 8 in [Appendix A. Maps](#) for a map of the lakes and rivers management area.

Desired Conditions (LRMA-DC)

- 01 This area provides diverse recreation opportunities that are enhanced by facilities, access, and unique services.
- 02 The area attracts diverse user groups and is a highly desirable recreation destination for day use and camping throughout the year.
- 03 User conflicts and public health and safety issues are infrequent.
- 04 Recreation opportunities adapt to changing trends and technologies.
- 05 Natural resources enhance the recreational experience in the Lakes and Rivers Management Area and are adaptable to disturbances.

Standards (LRMA-S)

- 01 Management decisions in this area shall be consistent with the latest approved Tonto Fee Program and Tonto Sustainable Recreation Plan, or other applicable protocols.
- 02 Within special recreation permit areas along shorelines, as identified in the motor vehicle use map (MVUM), vehicle use off designated roads and routes is only for accessing water and campsites.
- 03 Authorize only one privately owned marina each at Bartlett, Saguaro, Canyon, and Apache Lakes to be operated under special use permit.

Guidelines (LRMA-G)

- 01 Permitted marinas, restaurants, and resorts should maintain natural settings.
- 02 Vendors and commercial services should not be authorized if the need is already met by existing vendors. Any authorized vendors or commercial services should maintain a natural setting.
- 03 Vegetation should be managed to compliment or enhance recreation opportunities in this management area (e.g., remove non-native reeds at river access points, utilize native trees and brush for bank stabilization in developed areas).
- 04 Native riparian vegetation, natural streambank stability, floodplain and wetland function, and soil heath and stability should be maintained, or impacts mitigated from high-use recreation opportunities in the Lakes and Rivers Management Area.
- 05 Permitted livestock grazing should not be authorized in the Lakes and Rivers Management Area except where existing infrastructure or natural boundaries prevent livestock from accessing the rivers and lakes or where grazing can be used to manage hazardous fuels created by fluctuating water levels around Theodore Roosevelt Lake and Apache Lake.
- 06 Permitted livestock should not be authorized to cross the Verde River except where necessary and authorized in allotment management plans.

Management Approaches for Lakes and Rivers Management Area (LRMA-MA)

- 01 Develop and maintain strong working relationships with county sheriffs, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Salt River Project, and other partners as they are identified to provide quality recreation experiences for the public and to promote the Lakes and Rivers Management Area as a high-quality recreation destination on the Tonto National Forest.
- 02 Encourage forest visitors to use all of the different lakes and rivers in this management area to disperse recreation and improve experiences. Make information available about recreation opportunities at recreation sites, on social media, and through other media channels and partners.
- 03 Work with law enforcement, partners, and volunteers to reduce the number of public safety incidents (e.g., substance abuse, physical altercations, drownings, and injuries) and to identify needs for special orders (e.g., closures) when necessary to protect public health and safety.
- 04 Work with partners, local interest groups, and other applicable affected parties (e.g., the local county sheriff's office, Salt River Project, and permit holders) to remove debris in water bodies that pose a risk to public health and safety or inhibit recreation opportunities.
- 05 Work to educate forest users about the impacts of trash and litter in riparian areas and encourage "pack it in, pack it out" and Leave No Trace ethics.
- 06 Work collaboratively with partners to identify management tools to address capacity issues, changes in recreational trends and demands, and improve the overall recreation experience.
- 07 Notify the public of major changes to management practices utilizing a variety of outreach methods (e.g., press releases, social media posts).
- 08 Encourage and incentivize permit holders, partners, and volunteers to develop a system of litter clean up and trash disposal.
- 09 Consider a closure for possession or storage of glass containers within the lakes and rivers management area.

Saguaro Wild Burro Management Area (SWBMA)

The Tonto National Forest contains one wild burro territory established under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971. The Saguaro Wild Burro Management Area covers 27,092 acres, which includes 4,180 acres of the designated Saguaro Wild Burro Territory. The Saguaro Wild Burro Management Area is located within the Sunflower grazing allotment, with the majority located in the Four Peaks Wilderness (Figure A - 9 in appendix A). Burros have not been known to be present in the territory since the early 1990s. The territory is not currently occupied.

Desired Conditions (SWBMA-DC)

- 01 The Saguaro Burro Territory is unoccupied by burros.

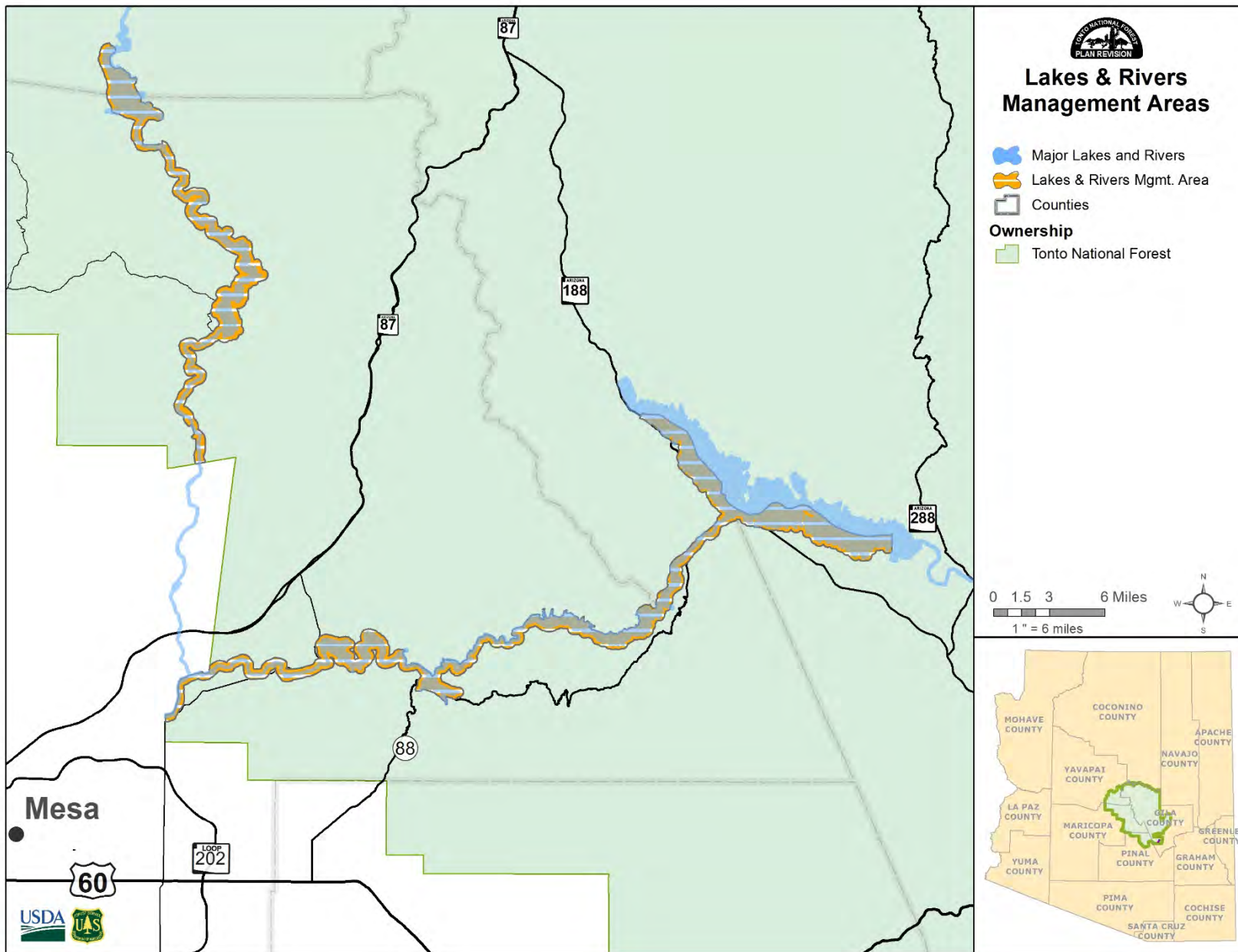


Figure A - 8. Lakes and rivers management areas on the Tonto National Forest