

USDA Forest Service
Southwestern Region

Coconino National Forest Wellness Plan

Fiscal Years 2004 to 2008



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Coconino National Forest Wellness Plan

Fiscal Years (FY) 2004 to 2008

Purpose

The purpose of the Coconino National Forest's Wellness Program, in accordance with FSM 6145, is to promote overall wellness of its employees both at work and at home.

6145.01 Authority

Title 5, United States Code, section 7901 (5 U.S.C. 7901) and Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 792 (5 CFR Part 792) provide authority to establish preventive programs related to health (wellness). Authorized activities related to wellness include providing health services, health education, specific disease screening, encouraging health maintenance, and establishment and operation of physical fitness programs. (FSM 6145.01)





6145.02 Objectives

Wellness programs are designed to encourage employee fitness and wellness programs which are flexible enough to promote active lifestyles to maintain mental and physical well-being, enhance an individual's ability to lead a satisfying and productive life both on and off the job, and reduce Forest Service costs by increasing productivity and reducing illness and injuries. (FSM 6145.02)

Specifically, objectives of the Coconino National Forest's Wellness Program are:



To provide education and information on wellness.

-  To encourage participation in fitness and health-related activities for physical and mental well-being.
-  To reduce work-associated costs absenteeism, health care costs and worker's compensation claims due to illness and injuries.
-  To increase productivity at work.
-  To provide an evaluation process which gives management and employees feedback on the value and progress of the wellness program.

6145.03 Policy

It is Forest Service policy to encourage employee wellness programs, where appropriate, to enhance employee ability to lead a satisfying and productive life and reduce Forest Service costs through increased productivity and reduction of illness and injury. (6145.03)

General Direction

1. The Coconino National Forest supports and encourages employee participation in a Wellness Program and expects every effort will be made by supervisors to allow maximum employee participation. Our Program represents a commitment to every employee of the Coconino National Forest to meet the physical and mental demands of the job while reducing the risk of accidents and injuries. Program activities will be designed to attain national goals. Program components of the Coconino National Forest's Wellness Plan include: health assessments, fitness programs, health education, and program monitoring and evaluation.
2. Employee participation is voluntary. Supervisors are encouraged to facilitate flexible work schedules whenever possible to accommodate employee requests to participate in any fitness program.
3. The Coconino National Forest recognizes the state of being physically and mentally well is more important than the precise program one follows to attain wellness. Therefore, a considerable amount of employee/supervisor discretion will be allowed in selecting and managing physical fitness activities.
4. Supervisors are encouraged to grant time for employees to participate in officially authorized special or one-time educational or awareness programs, such as Federal Fitness Day activities, a medical fitness screening procedure or any agency-sponsored Health Fair.
5. The Forest Service handbook provides direction for physical fitness training programs for fire fighter and law enforcement personnel (FSH 5109.17, 23.3 and FSH 5309.11, respectively). The Coconino National Forest wellness policy, as outlined herein, does not provide additional provisions to nor alters their established programs.

Responsibility

The Forest will designate a Forest Wellness Coordinator to coordinate the Forest's overall Wellness Program under the Chief's policy in FSM 6145. In addition, each unit (District/Center and Supervisor's Office) will designate an individual or group to be a "contact" or representative for wellness on their units. One member of the Union will be on the Committee as well. Unit wellness representatives can be rotated annually.

6145.1 Health Risk Screening

Wellness programs should be based on health risk screening to identify problems such as high blood pressure, high percent of body fat, use of tobacco products, inability to cope with stress, improper nutrition (high cholesterol), low activity or energy levels, or the inability to perform jobs safely and proficiently. (FSM 6145.1)

The Forest may pay for the Health Risk Screening phase of the wellness program based on identifying problems such as high blood pressure, high percent of body fat, use of tobacco products, inability to cope with stress, improper nutrition, low activity or energy levels, or the inability to perform jobs safely and proficiently.

Employees are encouraged to first review their Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan to determine if health assessments are a covered benefit. Employees may be reimbursed if funds are available as approved by the Line Officer. Authorization and procurement approval must be received prior to attendance.

6145.2 Physical Fitness Programs

If a unit enters a physical fitness program where Government time is involved, the unit must develop a plan that provides for screening to identify individuals in high-risk categories, develop an individual exercise program based on fitness goals and benefits to the Forest Service, identification of sanctioned fitness activities that consider the potential for injuries and the image such activities present to the public, and program administration and monitoring to determine benefits as well as risks. (FSM 6145.2)

Wellness is a positive and individual choice, pursued because it is seen as a richer way to live. It is a long-term, developmental process; seeking balance and life satisfaction while taking the best care possible of every aspect of life. It is generally recognized that physical exertion can have a positive impact on almost all aspects of an individual's life by reducing stress as well as improving overall health. In addition, physical activities help reduce employee absenteeism, health care costs, and worker's compensation claims.

Exercise Equipment and Fitness Facilities

Units may provide exercise equipment for its employees. Units that establish a fitness facility will need to develop implementation instructions, which will include: development of facility rules and regulations, identification and elimination of safety hazards, providing information on safe training practices and principles, and providing Forest Service policy for use of a government fitness facility for its employees.

Employee Participation

Participation in wellness activities is strongly encouraged. Employee participation is voluntary. A physical fitness program will be considered an employee privilege and not a right. Employee participation will be allowed consistent with work assignments. Unit supervisors reserve the right to revise and/or control the program participation when conflicts with accomplishment of agency work occur.

Official Time Use

Employees participating in the Wellness Program may use up to 3 hours of administrative leave per week (transaction code 66) for wellness time, if workload permits (refer to 6170 Region 3 Regional Forester memo dated August 26, 2003 on "Excused Absence for Fitness Activities"). Administrative wellness time may not be taken on holidays, other days and time which administrative leave is already granted, or on non-scheduled work days. Wellness time may be used between the hours of 0600 and 1800.

Approved Activities. When participating in a physical fitness program where official time is used, the Forest must identify and consider activities that limit the potential for injury. High intensity exercise and competitive sports activities are associated with increasing injury potential and are not included in the list of approved activities. Approved activities should involve cardiovascular and muscular endurance, strength activities, etc. Employees should be actively engaged in their fitness program, and take a holistic approach in developing personal wellness goals. The following are some activities that employees can participate in and may be considered when developing your Personal Wellness Agreement (see enclosure): running/jogging, walking, aerobics, weight machines, stationary bicycles, swimming (in a pool), stretching/toning, yoga, treadmill, stair/step machine, free weights, skipping/jumping rope, and non-contact martial arts. Employees can also participate in activities that contribute to their overall health, such as weight management, stress management, and smoking cessation classes and workshops.

Supervisors are encouraged to accommodate, to the extent possible, an employee's request for flexible work schedules to participate in health and fitness activities. In

addition to physical fitness activities, short periods of excused absences may be granted on official time for employees to participate in officially authorized special or one-time wellness events, such as educational or awareness programs, Federal Fitness Day activities, medical fitness screening procedures as part of joining a fitness program, or an agency-sponsored health fair.

Fitness Memberships Option

Currently, the Forest does not contribute funds for annual membership fees for its employees.

However, local health clubs do offer discounts to Forest Service employees and their families. Refer to "Local Health Clubs Available for Coconino National Forest Employees Information Sheet" dated August 10, 2001.

Wellness education and information

Employees can make better decisions in their wellness program if they are more informed on various aspects of fitness and wellness. One method is by having educational materials, such as books and videos, available to employees. Another method is through educational programs and seminars, which may be provided to employees if interest and need is determined, and if funds are available. Potential programs might include stress management, weight reduction, smoking cessation, nutrition, exercise science, first aid, CPR, and disease prevention. Employees with chronic conditions or diseases will be offered specialized training to enable them to cope with and reduce the risks of complications. Programs could be sponsored on either a forest or unit level. Some topics are suitable for district safety meetings, for example guest speakers discussing the potential benefits of stretching, back health, stress reduction, and other related topics. Other programs, such as weight reduction, might best be conducted through groups of interested employees who would attend sessions sponsored by health care professionals. Some programs focused on life-style change are by nature long-term programs, requiring employee commitment to the program in order for benefits to be realized.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

The Forest Wellness Coordinator will review participation, costs and accomplishments to measure progress and benefits to employees as well as to the organization on an annual basis. Employee feedback, assessment of unit fitness facilities, analysis of injury/illness/leave records and related safety data may be assessed.

6145.3 Expenditure of Funds

Expenditure of appropriated funds for wellness must be supported by, and consistent with, the Wellness Plan that identifies goals, benefits to the Forest Service, how and where

equipment will be used, and risk factors considered minimizing the potential for injury and liability. (FSM 6145.3)

The Coconino National Forest Leadership Team (FLT) will annually allocate funds by fiscal year to support the Wellness Program. Forest wellness meetings will be held to meet and share ideas about wellness on the Coconino National Forest, and to discuss how best to use the funds this year. For example, wellness events will be considered. In addition, based on availability of funds, each unit will provide a written request to the Forest Wellness Coordinator of the improvements to their exercise programs including purchase of equipment, exercise training assessments, and health education materials.

ENCLOSURES

[Personal Wellness Agreement](#) (Microsoft Word document)

[Physician or Health Care Provider's Authorization Form](#) (Microsoft Word document)

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