

Location and Contact Information

The Sierra Ancha Experimental Forest is administered by the USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS) and the Payson Ranger District of the Tonto National Forest. The experimental forest, which covers over 13,000 acres of diverse landscapes in central Arizona, is located roughly 15 miles north of Roosevelt Lake along Highway 288.

Directions from Phoenix: Take US Highway 60 east to Globe, Arizona. Turn north on highway 188 for approximately 15 miles. Then turn right onto Highway 288 and proceed for approximately 17 miles until you come to the headquarters facility on Parker Creek just past mile marker 278.

Directions from Flagstaff: Take Forest Highway 3 also known as Lake Mary Road for approximately 56 miles. Turn right on to Highway 87 and proceed through Payson, Arizona for 54 miles south to the junction with Highway 188. Turn left onto Highway 188 and proceed for 47 miles to the junction with Highway 288. Turn left onto Highway 288 and proceed for approximately 17 miles until you come to the headquarters facility on Parker Creek just past mile marker 278.

For more information:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/rmrs/forestsandranges/locations/saef#overview>

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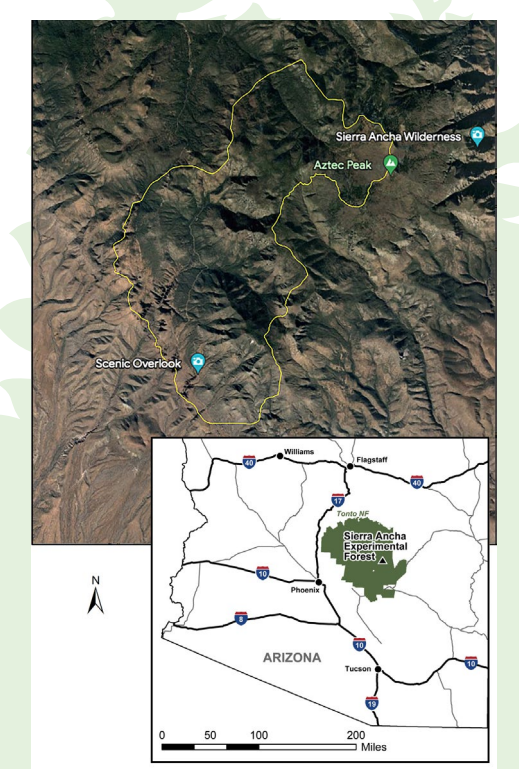
Or contact:

Tonto National Forest
2324 E. McDowell Rd.
Phoenix, Arizona 85006
602-225-5200
www.fs.usda.gov/tonto

Map of the Rocky Mountain Research Station

The map displays the Rocky Mountain Research Station's territory, which is divided into several sub-territories: Priest River, Deception Creek, Coram, Tenderfoot Creek, Boise Basin, Black Hills, Boise, Rapid City, Logan, Riverdale, Glacier Lakes, Fraser, Manitou, Desert, Great Basin, Cedar City, Fort Valley, Long Valley, and Sierra Ancha. Station locations are marked with black dots, and station headquarters are marked with a black star. Experimental forests are marked with green triangles, and experimental ranges are marked with red triangles. The map also shows the locations of Reno, Bozeman, Missoula, Moscow, Logan, Riverdale, Fort Collins, and Albuquerque. The map is titled 'Map of the Rocky Mountain Research Station'.

- Station Headquarters
- Station Territory
- Lab Location
- Experimental Forest
- Experimental Range
- Sierra Ancha



**Rocky Mountain
Research Station**

The Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS) is one of seven units within U.S. Forest Service Research and Development. RMRS maintains 12 field laboratories throughout a 12-state territory encompassing parts of the Great Basin, Southwest, Rocky Mountains and the Great Plains.

RMRS administers and conducts research on 14 Experimental Forests and Ranges (EF&Rs) in seven states. The U.S. Forest Service's EF&R network represents many of the ecosystem types found in the United States and Puerto Rico. Most EF&Rs contain significant acreage and many encompass large experimental study sites that are used to examine the effects of operational-scale treatments such as prescribed burning and forest thinning. RMRS also oversees activities on several hundred Research Natural Areas, which have been set aside to conduct research while conserving biological diversity.

For more information:

Rocky Mountain Research Station
2500 S. Pine Knoll Drive
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
928-556-2001
www.fs.usda.gov/research/rmrs

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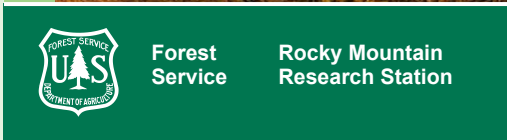
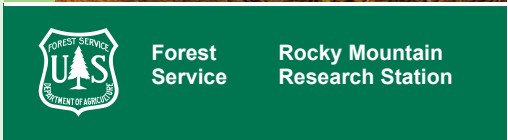
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employer, and lender.*



Sierra Ancha Experimental Forest

*Research from the Sonoran
Desert to the tall pines.
Connecting the past with the
present and preparing for the
future.*

A tall, columnar Saguaro cactus stands prominently in the foreground, its two arms beginning to grow. The cactus is set against a backdrop of rugged, red rock mountains under a clear blue sky. The desert floor is covered with sparse, low-lying vegetation and other smaller cacti. The lighting suggests a warm, sunny day, casting long shadows.



Conserving Our Public Lands

Public lands are one of the United States' most important natural assets. Their benefits include wildlife habitat, water supply, timber, recreational opportunities and edible plants, game and fish.

To help manage and understand these lands, the U.S. Forest Service developed a network of experimental forests and ranges. Today, the Experimental Forest & Range system is a network of 80 protected places that are used for long-term land and resource research and management.



U.S. Forest Service Range Scientists survey a range enclosure in 1938 at the experimental forest. Enclosures still exist today and have been resurveyed periodically to study changes in vegetation communities over the last century.

100 Years of Research

Early Range Scientists for the U.S. Forest Service began establishing vegetation research plots around Roosevelt Lake in central Arizona in the 1920s. Initial research objectives focused on understanding the impact of overgrazing by cattle and sheep in the area on erosion rates in the newly established reservoir. Over time, these objectives have expanded

from simply studying erosion to trying to better understand the entire ecology of the region.

In 1932, the Parker Creek Experimental Watershed was officially established and expanded a short time later to become the Sierra Ancha Experimental Forest in 1938. The enlargement of the experimental forest incorporated a greater elevation gradient from around 3500 feet at the lowest elevations to over 8000 feet at the uppermost elevations. The Civilian Conservation Corps constructed a hydrologic monitoring network as well as with many of the buildings at the headquarters location during the 1930s.

Early research projects included the effects of various management techniques including grazing, herbicide treatment of woody vegetation and prescribed fire on the amount and timing of water yield. In the upper Workman Creek watershed, some of the earliest studies in the region looking at the effects of timber harvesting on water yield were conducted which attempted to maximize the amount of both lumber and water that could be produced on the landscape in a sustainable manner. Later projects examined the impacts of high severity wildfire on ecosystem processes after the Coon Creek fire impacted the upper watershed in 2000.

Today, research continues to focus on climate, hydrology and vegetation, the three core areas in which the experimental forest was first established. New research ideas are able to draw on historical datasets to better understand a century of ecological change across the landscape which will hopefully support better decision making in the future. The mission of the Sierra Ancha Experimental Forest is to connect the past with the present, to better prepare for the future.



The experimental forest lies within the ancestral homeland of several Apache Indian groups that still reside in the area today.

Public Use of the Experimental Forest

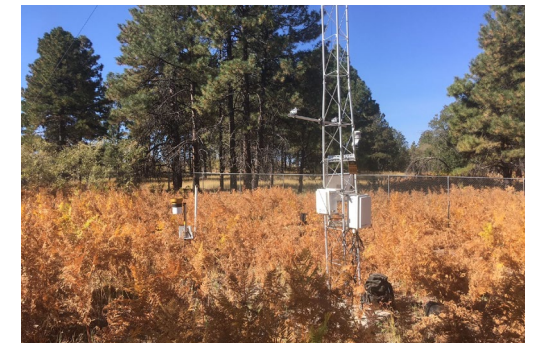
As part of the Tonto National Forest, the experimental forest is open to visitors and contains some of the most stunning natural beauty in the region. From waterfalls, to wildlife, to seemingly endless vistas and many cultural sites, hiking, hunting and day-use on the experimental forest are some of the many uses. It's a great place to experience multiple different life zones within a short distance from Sonoran Desert at the lower elevations to dense mixed conifer vegetation at the upper elevations. Please remember that this is an active research site. Visitors are asked to respect signs, fences and any research markers or equipment.

Conducting Research at the Experimental Forest

The Sierra Ancha Experimental Forest is a unique research site because it contains one of the longest running hydrologic monitoring networks in the region. It also possesses vegetation study sites that date back over a century with associated climatological data. Researchers today have access to these unique datasets which have

application beyond the boundaries of the experimental forest.

The facilities at the headquarters of the experimental forest can host visiting researchers overnight as well as provide lab and meeting space to visiting groups. Researchers interested in using historical data or conducting research at the Sierra Ancha Experimental Forest can contact the experimental forest's scientist-in-charge at the Rocky Mountain Research Station in Flagstaff. Unfortunately, these facilities are not currently open to the public.



The experimental forest maintains a meteorological station network extending from the mixed conifer stands in the upper elevations to the Sonoran Desert in the lower elevations.



Studies examining the impacts of various management strategies on erosion and water yield have been undertaken within semi-desert grasslands of the experimental forest.