

Land Management Plan for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Administrative Change #3
Changes Related to Appeal Decision Instruction
October 6, 2016

This Administrative Change to the 2015 Land Management Plan for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests implements changes to the plan for two reasons:

1. to correct an inaccuracy discovered after plan implementation, and
2. to add a reference to a document added to the Planning Record in compliance with instruction from Brian Ferebee, Reviewing Officer for the Chief, in a [decision letter](#) to Regional Forester Calvin Joyner dated July 13, 2016.

Additions to the text of the plan are indicated here by **bold** text. Deletions are indicated by ~~strike-through-text~~. In addition to the above indicators, changes are highlighted in **yellow** to enhance their visibility.

Change pages will be produced and used to replace the original pages in the printed documents. An updated electronic version (pdf) of the Land Management Plan will be posted to the Forests' website. Pages which have been changed will be identified in the page footers, and the date of the change will be included.

Guidelines for Recommended Wilderness

- The wilderness characteristics of each recommended wilderness should remain intact until a congressional decision on wilderness designation is made. Characteristics include naturalness, opportunities for solitude, opportunities for primitive recreation, and identified special features.
- Only nonmotorized travel may occur in recommended wilderness. However, motorized use associated with grazing allotments may occur and should be limited to that needed to carry out required management practices as authorized.
- Prescribed fire should be considered to reduce the risks and consequences of uncharacteristic wildfire by reducing unnatural fuel accumulations, if necessary to meet fire management objectives. Naturally occurring fires should be allowed to perform, as much as possible, their natural ecological role.
- Fire camps, helispots, and other temporary facilities should be located outside the recommended wilderness to protect wilderness values.

Management Approaches for Recommended Wilderness

The “Minimum Requirements Decision Guide” is used to assess actions proposed within recommended wilderness.

Related Plan Content for Recommended Wilderness

See the following sections: [Overall Recreation Opportunities](#), [Eligible and Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers](#), [Scenic Resources](#), and [Wildland Fire Management](#).

Chapter 4. Suitability

Introduction to Suitability

The Apache-Sitgreaves NFs are suitable, or appropriate, for a variety of uses. The broad use categories on the following pages are not intended to be all inclusive. Other uses, projects, or activities may be proposed during the life of the plan. Acquired lands are evaluated for suitability (chapter 4) prior to being allocated to appropriate uses.

An identification of an area as suitable for a particular use does not mean that the use will occur over the entire area. Likewise, identifying that a particular use is not suitable in a management area does not mean that the use will not occur in specific areas. The identification of an area as suitable for various uses is guidance for project and activity decision-making and is not a resource commitment or final decision approving projects and activities. Final decisions on resource commitments are made at the project level. The final decision to authorize livestock grazing would be made at a project (allotment) level.

Forestwide suitability calculations (acres suitable versus not suitable) can be found in appendix B of the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs “Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Land Management Plan” (Forest Service, 2012a). Specifics about suitability of areas are analyzed at the project or activity level and are subject to laws, regulations, and plan guidance. Areas that are not suitable are those where a use is not compatible with desired conditions. However, this does not mean that the use cannot occur. Conversely, areas identified as suitable, when analyzed at the project or activity level, may not be able to support that use¹.

The suitability determinations (plan decisions) are summarized below and displayed in tables 6 through 11. The information outside of these tables is not a plan decision but is provided for background. Plan decisions and other content for forestwide direction (chapter 2) and management areas (chapter 3) should also be consulted.

Livestock Grazing Suitability

Livestock grazing is defined as foraging by permitted livestock, including cattle, horses, and sheep. Provisions of the 1982 Planning Rule require that the capability and suitability for producing forage for grazing animals on National Forest System (NFS) lands be determined.

Capability is the potential of an area of land to produce resources and supply goods and services. Capability depends upon current conditions and site conditions such as climate variability, slope, landform, soils, and geology. **Although capability was determined in the 1980s during the first round of forest planning, it was necessary to recreate that determination because the original records were not retained. This process is documented in the planning record (Nelson, 2016).** ~~by compiling data from the most recent individual grazing allotment analyses. Landscape scale conditions have not changed significantly since this evaluation.~~

Suitability is the appropriateness of applying certain resource management practices to a particular area of land, in consideration of relevant social, economic, and ecological factors. Suitable rangeland is determined based on compatibility with desired conditions and objectives in the plan area. Lands within the plan area are not identified as suitable for a certain use if that use is prohibited by law, regulation, or policy; would result in substantial and permanent impairment of the productivity of the land or renewable resources; or if the use is incompatible with the desired conditions for the relevant portion of the plan area. A unit of land may be suitable for a

¹ As a result of site-specific analysis if plan suitability needs adjustment, it can be accomplished through a plan amendment.

Chapter 3. Management Area Direction

variety of individual or combined management practices. Table 6 identifies areas as suitable or not suitable for livestock grazing.