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Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

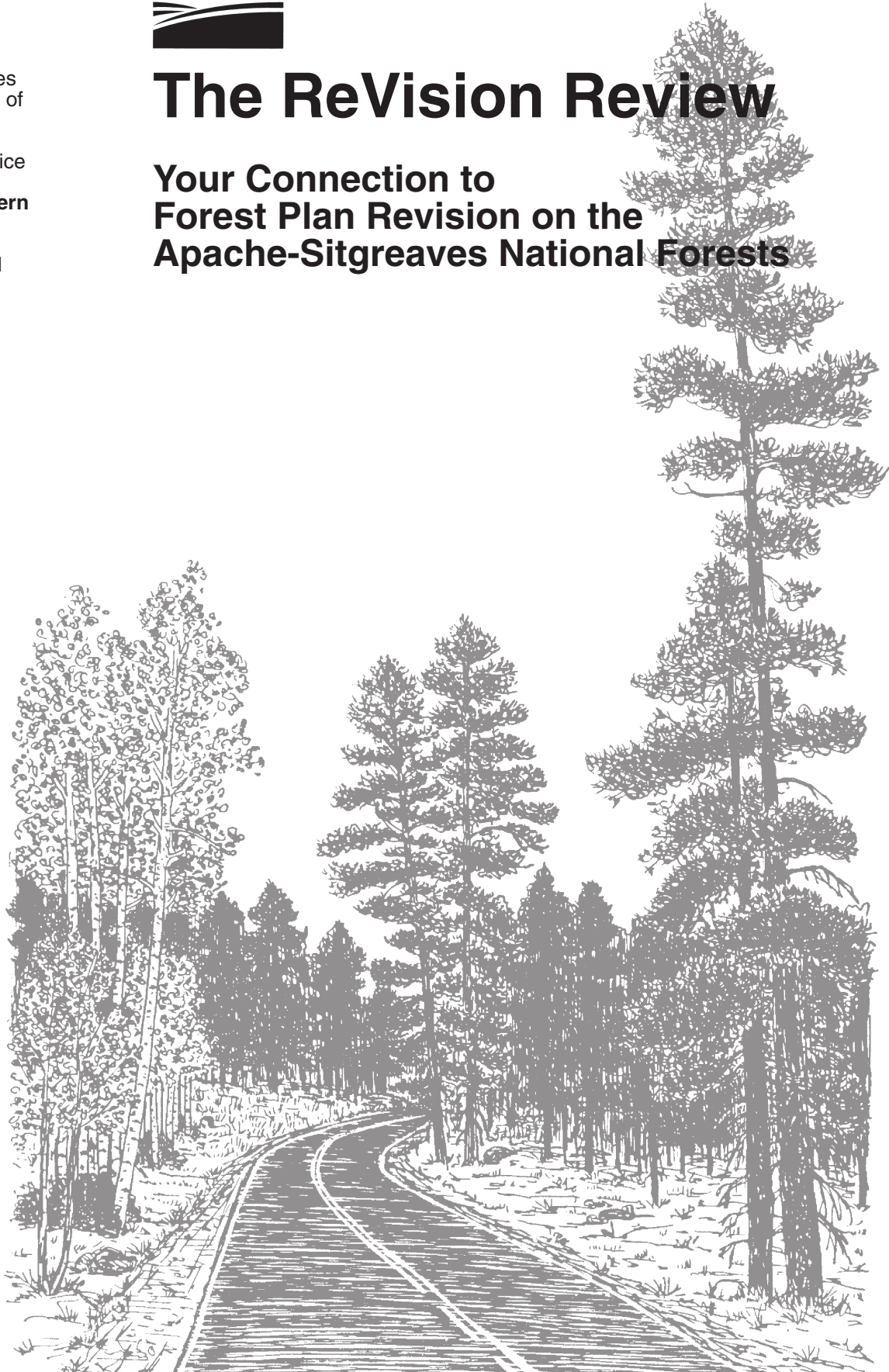
Southwestern
Region

MB-R3-01-1



The ReVision Review

**Your Connection to
Forest Plan Revision on the
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests**



A Message from the Forest Supervisor

I want to wish all of you a happy holiday season and encourage you to continue to participate in the forest plan revision process. This progress report, “The ReVision Review,” is just one more way for us to stay connected with you as we work together to build a vision for the future of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests.

The forests are important to all of us. It is where we recreate, where some of you grew up and where some of you work. For some of you it is your own backyard and a vacation destination for others. The forests have and continue to shape our communities and our way of life. The forest plan will guide our management and describe what we want the forests to look like and what it will provide. As the responsible official for plan revision, one of my jobs is to define the scope of what needs to be revised in our current forest plan. You can help me by providing your recommendations that will help shape the future of our forests.

The focus of this first edition of “The ReVision Review” is what you have told us so far.



*Elaine J. Zieroth, Supervisor,
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests*



*Fisherman at Luna Lake, Apache-Sitgreaves National
Forests*

A summary of your comments is included in this document, and we will use your comments as the starting point for our January 2007 public meetings. During these meetings we will discuss the issues you have brought forward so far, and ask you to help us learn more about your issues and concerns. So please review the summary of comments and come to the meetings prepared to work with other participants to further discuss these issues and concerns. The meeting schedule is also included and posted on our Web site. Thank you for your comments so far, and I look forward to your participation in round two of our public meetings in January.

I'll see you there!

Elaine J. Zieroth

Forest Supervisor

“Caring for the Land and Serving People”

A Forest Plan . . .

What Exactly is a Forest Plan?

The revised forest plan will provide a broad long-term strategy for guiding natural resources and land use activities on the forests. It will set the vision for what we want the forests to look like and what we want the forests to provide by describing desired conditions for vegetation types and our multiple-use mission. It will describe how we expect to get to the desired conditions through stated objectives, suitability of areas for certain uses, and identification of special areas. It will also provide information and guidance for project and activity decisionmaking through guidelines. The revised forest plan will be more adaptable to changes in forest health, social desires and local economies, and will utilize the best available science.

The revised forest plan will have five main components:

1. **Desired Conditions** – what we want the forests to look like and what we want the forests to provide. These conditions must contribute to ecological, social and economic sustainability.
2. **Objectives** – the projected outcomes that measure progress toward achieving the desired conditions within specific timeframes. An example of a plan objective would be to “reduce hazardous fuels on 5,000 acres per year for 5 years in the wildland-urban interface.”
3. **Guidelines** – provides information and guidance for project and activity decisionmaking that protects resources and helps achieve desired conditions.
4. **Suitability of Areas** – uses and activities that are generally suitable in certain areas of the forests and contribute to the desired conditions.
5. **Special Areas** – areas that are unique or have special characteristics that contribute to the desired conditions. Examples include congressionally designated wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, and research natural areas.

What a Forest Plan is NOT

The revised forest plan, by itself, does not make decisions about particular projects. It provides the vision and direction for the future. When specific actions or projects are proposed to address site-specific concerns, the Forest Service will conduct detailed and site-specific planning and analysis with public involvement, in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations. Examples of these types of projects are wildland-urban interface treatments, livestock grazing allotment analysis, decisions on individual roads and trails, prescribed fire projects, recreation site development and fish barrier construction.



Map of Arizona showing the location of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

What You Have Told Us So Far . . .

Forest Plan Revision Public Comments Summer/Fall 2006

A complete listing of the comments is available on our Web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf/plan-revision>

Background

As of November 1, 2006, the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests received over 1,000 comments related to forest plan revision and implementation of the Travel Management Rule. Comments were gathered during meetings with the public, agencies, organizations, and forest user groups, as well as via e-mails, letters, phone calls, and comment forms.

These comments were placed into subject categories and summarized by members of the Apache-Sitgreaves planning and travel management teams. This document contains a general summary of the comments.

Summary of Comments

American Indian Rights and Interests

- Forest threats may spread to tribal lands – mistletoe, fire, etc.
- Forest users may trespass onto tribal lands – horn hunters, poachers, etc.
- Maintenance of forest improvements bordering tribal lands – fence, roads, etc.
- Forest products are important to tribal gathering – acorns, roots, nuts, etc.

Economics

- Recognize the forests' contribution to the local economy (via logging, grazing, recreation, tourism, property value, transportation system, etc.).
- Consider economic effects in plan analyses and monitoring.

Fire Management

- Buildup of fuels increases the potential fire threat.
- Need to utilize prescribed and natural fire. (Coordinate with permitted users. Allow to burn in steep, inaccessible areas.)

- Need for fire protection and fuels treatment around communities.
- Protect vs. do not protect structures during wildfire suppression.
- Close forest sooner during high fire danger.

Forest Access

- Roads being closed and ineffectiveness of closure devices.
- Need to re-examine wildlife habitat closure areas.
- Diminished vehicle access to the forest.
- Access for persons with disabilities may be affected.
- Retain access for emergency/fire vehicles, general motorized vehicles, dispersed camping/hunting/hiking, permitted use, forest management, forest products, and private land.

Forest Health and Threats

- Consider effects of climate and drought.
- Loss of grasslands because of conifer and piñon/juniper encroachment.
- Landscapes being fragmented and effects on wildlife and ranching lifestyle.
- Need insect and disease management, specifically mistletoe infestation.
- Need detection, mapping, and management of noxious and invasive weeds.
- General species mortality, specifically loss of aspen.
- Forest is too thick and overgrown.

Forest Products

- Firewood gathering policy needs review (diameter limit, areas open, types permitted). Use of motor vehicles for firewood gathering being limited.
- Need to salvage dead and dying trees (spruce, etc.).
- Need sustainable woody biomass.
- Need more stewardship projects and need to implement faster.
- Need small sales program and more logging/timber sales.

The ReVision Process . . .

Where are We in the Forest Plan Revision Process?

We are in the midst of completing our initial public outreach focused on learning what people think “needs to change” in our current forest plan. We completed the first round of 16 public meetings in the summer and fall of 2006. We also made initial contact with counties and local, State, and Federal agencies. We will be meeting with tribal governments very soon. We will also participate in a combined public meeting with the Tonto National Forest in the Phoenix area early in 2007. The meeting details will be posted on our Web site when arrangements are final.

What Can You Do Right Now?

Our next step is to clarify what we’ve heard so far. We need to learn more about the issues and concerns you have brought forward and what forest issues are most important to you. Please plan to attend one or more of the second round of public meetings in January 2007. During these meetings we will verify and discuss the issues and concerns that are important to you. We need your

help. Please review the summary of comments prior to the January 2007 meetings, and confirm that your issues and concerns are included. Then come to the meetings prepared to discuss your issues and concerns in greater detail and with other participants.

Future Public Meetings in Spring 2007

Forest Service resource specialists are currently working on the initial draft of a comprehensive evaluation report, or CER. This report will describe the current social, economic and ecological conditions and trends on the forests. Once a draft is completed, the report will be available at ranger district offices and posted on our Web site. We will have our third round of public meetings in late Spring of 2007. During this round of meetings we will ask for your comments on the initial draft CER. We will let you know when meeting dates and locations are determined. The final CER will help the responsible official (our forest supervisor) determine what needs to be revised in our forest plan and how the forests are managed in the future.

Public Meeting Schedule for Second Round, January 2007

Date	Arizona City/ Town	Location	Time
January 9, 2007	Clifton	Greenlee County Courthouse Conference Room	6:30-8:30 p.m.
January 11, 2007	Alpine	Alpine Community Center	6:30-8:30 p.m.
January 16, 2007	Eagar	Eagar Town Hall	6:30-8:30 p.m.
January 17, 2007	Heber/Overgaard	Mogollon High School Library	6:30-8:30 p.m.
January 18, 2007	Show Low	Show Low Library Conference Room	6:30-8:30 p.m.

If you have special needs to attend any of these meetings, please contact Julia Faith Rivera at (928) 333-6336.

The ReVision Process . . . *continued*

Key Steps in the Forest Plan Revision Process

Step	What You Can Do	When
Initial Public Meetings	Learn about the planning process and let us know what we need to focus on during plan revision.	Summer/Fall 2006
Comprehensive Evaluation Report (CER)	Provide input to the CER—including current conditions and trends on the forests. Help review the draft CER.	Spring/Summer 2007
Develop the Proposed Plan	Let's work together to develop desired conditions, objectives, special areas, suitability of areas, guidelines, and a monitoring plan.	Summer 2007- Spring 2008
90-day Comment Period	This is your chance to provide formal written comments regarding the proposed plan you've helped to build.	Spring 2008
30-day Objection Period	A chance to file a formal objection regarding the proposed plan.	Summer 2008
Approve Plan	Forest supervisor approves the plan. Help us implement the revised plan.	Spring 2009

First Round of
Public Meetings,
Summer-Fall
2006

Second Round
of Public
Meetings,
January 2007

Third Round of
Public Meetings,
Spring-Summer
2007

Which Forest Service Employees are Working on Forest Plan Revision?

A 4-person core team has been dedicated to the completion of the forest plan revision process. You may contact them with any questions and comments.

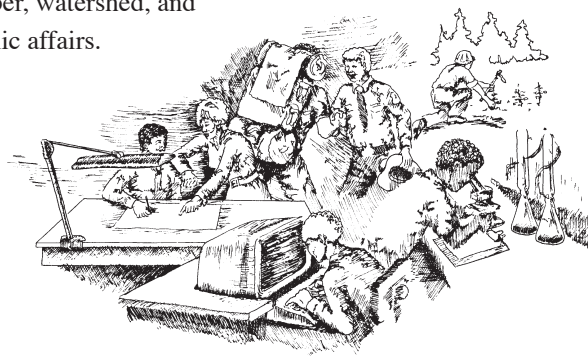
Michelle Davalos - Plan Revision Team Leader
– (928) 333-6334

Mitchel White – Ecologist (wildlife, range,
vegetation, soil, water, air) – (928) 333-6348

Evelyn Treiman - Recreation Planner (recreation,
social and economic systems) – (928) 333-6322

Julia Faith Rivera - Writer Editor – (928) 333-6336

Many other Forest Service resource specialists are lending their expertise and skills in the revision effort. These extended team members contribute a wide range of specialties including archeology, recreation, wildlife, fisheries, engineering, transportation system, lands, fire/fuels, geographic information systems (GIS), timber, watershed, and public affairs.



What You Have Told Us So Far . . . *continued*

FS Communication and Management

- Need more outreach and education with general public and school-age children on Forest Service history and mission, natural processes, “Leave No Trace,” wildlife.
- Laws, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), other mandates, lawsuits, and appeals are affecting the Forest Service’s ability to manage. Need more Forest Service personnel on the forest (presence).
- Need to consult and coordinate with local, State, and Federal agencies and organizations, like USDI Bureau of Land Management (BLM), State Lands, Arizona Game & Fish Department (AZGFD), United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), counties, sheriff’s office and tribes. Role of other agencies in planning and management of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests.
- Agree vs. do not agree with Forest Service management approaches (decisions, management styles, priorities, Forest Service personnel actions, etc.).
- Public involvement not effective. Use of public input in the planning process. Need to utilize local input.
- Need to identify opportunities and encourage more volunteers and partnerships.

Heritage Resources

- Consider cultural, historic, and prehistoric resources in the plan.

Law Enforcement

- Increase law enforcement vs. decrease.
- Increased garbage and littering on the forest.
- Need to focus law enforcement on violators.
- Suggest methods to supplement law enforcement (AZGFD officers, citizen enforcement, charge fees to user groups) and increase conformance (increase education, review citations and fines, hotline for reporting violations).

Law and Regulation

- Laws NEPA, ESA, regulations, other mandates affecting forest management.
- Implement specific laws and regulations – Economic Flexibility Act, Federal Financial Management Act (FFMA), Federal Financial Management Improvement Act (FFMIA), Organic Act.

Multiple Use

- Continue multiple-use management vs. limit or restrict certain uses.
- Conflicts occur when multiple use is practiced (recreation, grazing, and wildlife).

National Forest System Lands

- Need more land exchanges vs. no more land exchanges.
- Consistency in the process, policy, administration for special uses.
- Special use needs include outfitter guide permits, utility easements, transportation rights-of-way, brush pits.

Outdoor Recreation

Developed

- Recreation sites managed by concessionaire – site maintenance, personnel concerns.
- Increase developed recreation facilities (campsites, boating sites) vs. no new development.
- Maintain and improve recreation facilities.
- Effects of recreation on other resources (riparian, noise, safety, grazing, water).
- Need no-fee campgrounds.
- Need maps and information regarding camping areas (post to Web site).

Dispersed

- Need to maintain current dispersed camping opportunities vs. increase those opportunities.
- Effects of other management actions on dispersed camping.
- Effects of other management actions on game retrieval.

What You Have Told Us So Far . . . *continued*

- Other dispersed recreation – undisturbed/ undeveloped areas, shooting areas, watchable wildlife, scenic byway, adopt-a-trail.
- Effects of other management actions and prescribed burning on hunting and fishing.
- Need maintained nonmotorized trails.

Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Management

- Need to increase vs. balance vs. eliminate OHV use/ opportunities.
- Effects of OHV use (new roads, noise, erosion, user conflicts, litter, wildlife, pollution, safety, heritage resources, homeowners).
- Need more OHV opportunities (jeep trails, loop trails, longer trails, areas).

Planning Process

- Assessments and research used in forest plan revision process should be impartial.
- Need to have effective monitoring.
- Questions related to process of forest plan revision.

Riparian

- Emphasize riparian management.

Rangeland Management

- Questions regarding criteria used for determining grazing suitability and livestock capacity.
- Effects of livestock (cow, sheep, feral horses) on other resources.
- Allotment management issues – stocking rate, maintenance improvement, allotment closures, vehicle access.
- Recognize benefits of grazing and the ranching lifestyle.

Special Areas

- Make Blue Range Primitive Area wilderness vs. do away with it.
- Need roadless areas vs. no need for them.
- Need more wilderness vs. no more wilderness.
- Do away with “wild and scenic” study rivers.

Social

- Recognize that population and demand for forest resources continues to increase.
- Recognize traditional use and culture (local forest users, communities, grazing, logging).
- People coming to the area cause “problems.”

Transportation System

- Existing roads may be closed.
- Need more roads vs. current amount of roads vs. fewer roads.
- Need motorized opportunities (jeeps, areas, connector routes, utilization of “logging” roads).
- Implementation and maintenance of transportation system (signing, classification, budget, etc.).
- Suggestions and questions regarding inventory and map of transportation system.
- Effects related to transportation system (erosion, air, water, noise, wildlife).

Vegetation/Silvicultural Treatments

- Need more thinning of forest vegetation.
- Need to manage a variety of vegetative compositions/ structures.

Water

- Consider effects on water rights.

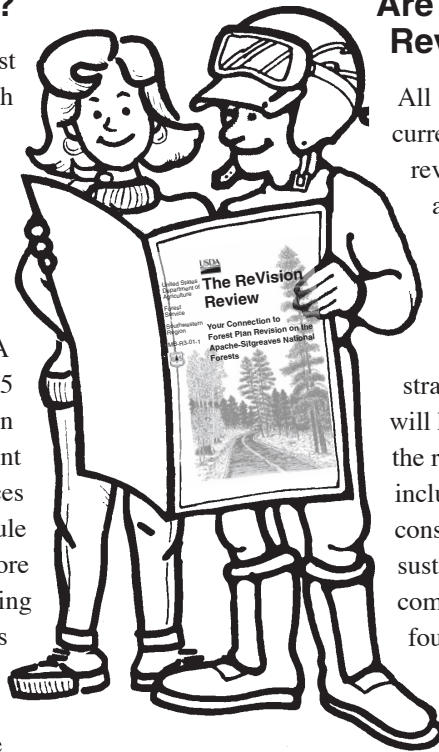
Wildlife and Fisheries

- Manage and protect threatened and endangered species (T&E) vs. management of specific species (Mexican gray wolf, Mexican spotted owl, northern goshawk, Apache trout).
- Continue to improve fisheries, review priority streams. Fish populations declining.
- Need to re-examine wildlife habitat closure areas.
- Manage wildlife (antelope, elk, bear) and effects to wildlife and habitat from other management activities and forest uses (grazing, fire, noise, disturbance, timber harvest).

Why Revise . . .

Why Revise the Forest Plan?

In 1976 Congress passed the National Forest Management Act, which requires that each national forest periodically update its forest plan. The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests current forest plan was approved on October 20, 1987. Changes in economic, social and ecological conditions, as well as new policies and priorities, mean some portions of the plan are no longer current. A new planning rule was established in 2005 that provides the Forest Service guidance on how to revise those portions of the current plan that are no longer current, and replaces the 1982 planning regulations. The 2005 rule focuses on developing a plan that is more strategic in nature, more flexible in adapting to changing conditions, better incorporates the best available science, monitors and evaluates progress and results, and involves the public in a more collaborative way throughout the process. It does not change the Forest Service's stewardship mission, focus on sustainability, multiple-use responsibilities, or requirements to comply with existing environmental statutes and regulations.



Are Other Arizona Forests Revising Their Plans?

All six national forests in Arizona are currently in the process of forest plan revision. Arizona national forests include approximately 10.1 million acres of some of the most spectacularly beautiful and diverse public lands in the United States. The USDA Forest Service Southwestern Region has developed policy papers on strategies, processes and tools to use that will help guide us through certain tasks in the revision process. These policy papers include advice on collaboration, science consistency, ecological, social and economic sustainability, and the development of plan components. These policy papers can be found on the Southwestern Region Web site at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/plan-revision/index.shtml>. The regional strategy for forest plan revision will ensure consistency across all forests and result in maximum efficiency and cost effectiveness for the revision efforts.

How Can I Participate in Forest Plan Revision?

Your participation and comments are welcome at any time. There are several ways to participate in the forest plan revision process:

Public Meetings: a chance to interact and work with Forest Service representatives and other members of the public.

Web site: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf/plan-revision/> - a place to find more information about the revision process and opportunity to provide comments.

E-Mail: asnf.planning@fs.fed.us - contact us with your questions or comments.

Phone: (928) 333-4301 - ask for a planning team member.

Fax: (928) 333-5966

TTY: (928) 333-6292

Regular Mail: USDA Forest Service
Attn: Plan Revision Team
P.O. Box 640
Springerville, AZ 85938

Let us know if you have other ideas that will better help us work together.

*Hope to see you at the public
meetings in January 2007!*

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We're on the Web!

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf/plan-revision/>