

APACHE-SITGREAVES NATIONAL FORESTS



User's Guide

Working Draft Land Management Plan

June 2009

Introduction

The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNFs) is working towards a different land management plan from the current 1987 Plan (current plan). The current plan is more prescriptive in nature—it focuses on the “how to” for every specific action; while the new plan we are working towards is more conceptual and goal-oriented—it will focus on what the ASNFs should look like and provide. In this way, the new plan will establish general conditions we would like the forests to reflect, but it will not establish the detailed actions to get there—these will be developed during the course of specific projects.

What is the Working Draft?

The Working Draft Land Management Plan (Working Draft) is an important part of the revision process as it is meant to provide a foundation for collaborative discussion and feedback in developing the Proposed Land Management Plan (Proposed Plan). The Working Draft addresses all five components necessary in every land management plan:

Desired Conditions

What we want the forests to look like and provide; these conditions contribute to ecological, social, and economic sustainability.

Objectives

The projected outcomes that measure progress toward achieving desired conditions within specific timeframes. These move us towards the desired conditions.

Suitability of Areas

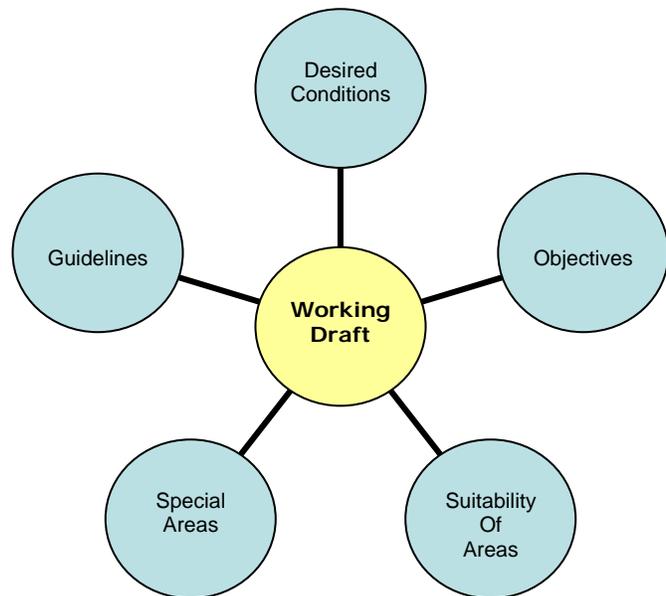
This relates to the uses and activities that are generally suitable in certain areas of the forests.

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.

Guidelines

These provide information and guidance for project and activity decision-making that protects resources and helps achieve desired conditions.



These five components are necessary in every land management plan.

Several revision efforts have led to the development of the Working Draft. Beginning in late 2006 and early 2007, we held several public meetings and encouraged public comment to help us identify the “Need for Change” in the ASNFs and its management. Based on your input and our science-based evaluations, we identified three topics to focus revision efforts: Maintenance and Improvement of Ecosystem Health, Managed Recreation, and Forest-Community Interaction—these topics are summarized in the ASNFs Comprehensive Evaluation Report (CER)*.

After narrowing the focus to these three topics, we began to work on a draft for the Proposed Plan. The first step in doing so was to develop a draft of the desired conditions, which we completed and opened up for public discussion in late 2008. After receiving much feedback, we developed a more complete version of the draft Proposed Plan to include the remaining four components. This completed version of the draft Proposed Plan is what we are calling the “Working Draft.”

Your feedback on the Working Draft is essential because it will help us to more fully develop the Proposed Plan. Once the Proposed Plan is completed, a notice will be published in the Federal Register and the formal NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process will begin which includes a period of public comment and objection. After this, the last step in the revision process will take place when the responsible official for the ASNFs (the Forest Supervisor) reviews and approves the plan.

Steps in the Revision Process

STEP	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	WHEN
Initial Public Meetings	We received input from you on what to focus on during plan revision.	Fall 2006- Winter 2007
Comprehensive Evaluation Report (CER)	We used your input and our science-based evaluations to create the CER.	Summer 2007- Winter 2008
Develop the Proposed Plan	Let’s work together to develop the five components and a monitoring plan.	Fall 2008- Summer 2009
90-day Comment Period	This is your chance to provide formal written comments regarding the Proposed Plan you’ve helped to build.	Winter 2009
30-day Objection Period	A chance to file a formal objection regarding the Proposed Plan.	Summer 2010
Approve Plan	Forest Supervisor approves the revised Plan. Help us implement the revised Plan.	Fall 2010

* You can view the “Need for Change” as outlined in the CER on the ASNFs web site: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf/plan-revision/documents.shtml>

Using the Working Draft

The Working Draft is a technical document and much of the information within it reflects comprehensive ecological, social, and economic analysis. This set-up can be overwhelming for folks who are unfamiliar with such documents and/or do not have experience in these fields. To help you make the most of this experience, we have some suggested steps for using the Working Draft.

Step 1: Review the Information

Upon looking through the Table of Contents, you will notice that the Working Draft is organized in sections according to the five components—Desired Conditions, Objectives, Suitability of Areas, Special Areas, and Guidelines—and then according to specific subjects such as Motorized Recreation and Wilderness.

It is important to note that information about specific subjects is located within several sections. Also, some subjects—such as Forest Products—cannot be fully addressed without also looking at other related subjects—such as Timber Management. As you look through the Working Draft, you will want to review all of the relevant information so you can get a feel for the “big picture.”

The following table shows some subjects we have received much public input about. The center column displays some of the places within the Working Draft where specific subjects are addressed, and the right column displays some examples of comments we have received during the revision process.

SUBJECT	PLAN COMPONENTS <i>How the Working Draft addresses these subjects</i>	EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC COMMENTS WE RECEIVED <i>Summarized</i>
Motorized Recreation	Desired Conditions p. 47 Objectives p. 84 Suitability of Areas p. 115 Guidelines p. 122-123	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase vs. balance vs. eliminate OHV use and opportunities • Concern for the 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)
Grazing Management	Desired Conditions p. 55 Objectives p. 91 Suitability of Areas p. 112 Guidelines p. 125	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions regarding criteria used for determining grazing suitability and livestock capacity • Effects of livestock on resources

SUBJECT	PLAN COMPONENTS <i>How the Working Draft Addresses these subjects</i>	EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC COMMENTS WE RECEIVED <i>Summarized</i>
Forest Health	Desired Conditions p. 11-42 Objectives p. 77-82 Guidelines p. 117-122	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of grasslands because of encroaching woodlands • Forests are too thick and overgrown
Forest Products	Desired Conditions p. 55 Objectives p. 90 Suitability of Areas p. 114 Guidelines p. 124	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need sustainable woody biomass • Need more stewardship and need to implement faster • Need small sales program and more logging/timber sales
Wildland-Urban Interface	Desired Conditions p. 53 Objectives p. 88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for fire protection and fuels treatment around communities • Protect vs. do not protect structures during wildfire suppression
Land Exchanges	Guidelines p. 124	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more land exchanges vs. no more land exchanges
Wilderness	Special Areas p. 101	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more wilderness vs. no more wilderness • Areas being considered for potential Wilderness *

Step 2: Consider these Questions

As you review the information in the Working Draft, consider the following questions to help you evaluate its effectiveness:

DESIRED CONDITIONS

- Does the Working Draft identify the appropriate desired conditions? If not, which desired conditions should be changed? Why? How?
- Should there be additional desired conditions? If yes, what are they?
- Specifically, should there be additional desired conditions that better describe geographic areas? If yes, what are they?

* *Potential* Wilderness areas are not directly addressed in the Working Draft. For more information, please see the wilderness evaluation on the ASNf's web site:

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

OBJECTIVES

- Will the objectives in the Working Draft help us reach the desired conditions? If not, which objectives should be changed? Why? How?

SUITABILITY OF AREAS

- For each area listed, are the appropriate suitable uses identified? If not, which suitable uses should be changed? Where? Why? How?

SPECIAL AREAS

- Have the right areas been recommended for special area designation? Are the proposed management approaches for these areas appropriate? If not, what should be changed? Why?
- Is there a need for additional wilderness on the ASNFs? If not, why? If yes, what areas should be recommended and why? For more information, see the wilderness evaluation on the ASNFs' web site:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf/plan-revision/documents.shtml>

GUIDELINES

- Do the guidelines provide appropriate technical guidance for project activity and decision-making? If not, what should be changed? Why? How?

Because we are working towards a more conceptual and goal-oriented plan, the comments you make will be most useful if they address broader aspects of land management. For example, compare the following two comments:

"When land exchanges are made, there should be no net loss of private land."	VS.	"The ASNFs should exchange <u>X</u> piece of land for <u>X</u> ."
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The first comment conveys a general idea—land exchanges should not result in a net loss of private property, and the second comment conveys a more specific idea—a land exchange should take place at X location. While specific comments, like the latter example, are useful in developing specific projects, they fall short in helping us develop a conceptual, goal-oriented plan.

Step 3: Tell Us What You Think

We need your input to make this a better plan! After you have reviewed the Working Draft and considered the questions about the five components, let us know what you think. To help you prepare your comments, an optional form is

attached at the end of this User Guide. Please note that a single comment submitted multiple times (such as a form letter) will not receive more consideration than a well-thought-out comment submitted once.

The most useful comments answer the questions:

WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? WHY? HOW?

Your participation and comments are welcome at any time; however, comments* received about the Working Draft will be most useful in developing the Proposed Plan if we receive them by **August 31, 2009**.

Written comments can be sent via:

Regular Mail: USDA Forest Service

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

ATTN: Plan Revision Team

P.O. Box 640

Springerville, AZ 85938

E-mail: asnf.planning@fs.fed.us

Fax: (928) 333-5966

You can obtain a printed copy or CD of the Working Draft by request from the ASNFs Supervisor's Office:

Address: 30 S. Chiricahua Dr.
Springerville, AZ 85938

Phone: (928) 333-4301

TTY: (928) 333-6292

The Working Draft is also available on the ASNFs' web site in addition to more information on the revision process: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf/plan-revision/>

Please contact us if you have further questions or you would like to speak with a member of the planning team.

* Comments received during the revision process, including names and addresses of those who commented, become a part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

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APACHE-SITGREAVES NATIONAL FORESTS

Working Draft Land Management Plan - Comment Form

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

E-Mail (optional): _____

Phone (optional): _____

Date: _____

COMMENTS (Please be as specific as possible):

Overall Reaction

- What would you do to improve the Working Draft?

Desired Conditions

- Does the Working Draft identify the appropriate desired conditions? If not, which should be changed? Why? How?
- Should there be additional desired conditions? If yes, what are they?
- Specifically, should there be additional desired conditions that better describe geographic areas? If yes, what are they?

Objectives

- Will the objectives in the Working Draft help us reach the desired conditions? If not, which objectives should be changed? How? Why?

Suitability of Areas

- For area listed, are the appropriate suitable uses identified? If not, which suitable uses should be changed? Where? Why? How?

Special Areas

- Have the right areas been recommended for special area designation? Are the proposed management approaches for these areas appropriate? If not, what should be changed? Why?
- Is there a need for additional wilderness on the ASNFs? If not, why? If yes, why and what areas should be recommended? See the wilderness evaluation on the forests' Web site for more information: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf/plan-revision/documents.shtml>

Guidelines

- Do the guidelines provide appropriate technical guidance for project activity and decision-making? If not, what should be changed? Why? How?

Mail your comments to Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, Attention: Plan Revision Team, PO Box 640, Springerville, AZ 85938 or E-Mail your comments to: asnf.planning@fs.fed.us

NOTE: Comments received during the revision process, including names and addresses of those who commented, become a part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.