

APACHE-SITGREAVES NATIONAL FORESTS



"Forest Plan Revision Update-April 2008" *A Message from the Acting Forest Supervisor*

Our previous Forest Supervisor, Elaine J. Zieroth, retired in December. Since then, I have been serving as the Acting Forest Supervisor. I anticipate that our new Forest Supervisor should be selected soon and arrive early this summer.

As you may recall, our 2005 Planning Rule was enjoined this past Spring. The planning rule provides guidance on *how to* revise a forest plan.

We received some good news. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the 2008 Planning Rule was released in early February. The US Department of Agriculture approved the planning rule and it will be published in the Federal Register the week of April 14. The planning rule still emphasizes development of a strategic forest plan. The key changes from the 2005 Planning Rule are that it calls for using "appropriate NEPA" and it allows the use of standards as a planning component. For more information, see http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/2008_planning_rule.html.

After the planning rule is in place, we will update our planning schedule. The schedule will identify the next steps in the revision process, including public participation. If you have suggestions on how we can improve collaboration efforts, please let us know.

The planning team continues to develop documents that will describe how the forests contribute to social, economic, and ecological sustainability as well as what needs to change in the current forest plan. Once completed, we will post these documents to our website and make them available upon request.

We recently amended our forest plan to provide clearer direction on wildland fire use. "Wildland fire use" is the term for utilizing naturally ignited fire to accomplish resource management objectives.

My staff has posted an electronic version of the current plan to our website <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf/projects/>. This version incorporates the wildland fire use amendment as well as all previous amendments.

For more information about the plan revision process visit our website, e-mail us at asnf.planning@fs.fed.us, or call us at 928-333-4301.

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