

# APACHE-SITGREAVES NATIONAL FORESTS



## "Forest Plan Revision Update-December 2009"

*A Message from the Forest Supervisor*

Dear Friend,

I know it's a busy time for all of us but I wanted to update you on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests plan revision efforts as 2009 comes to a close.

You may recall that we started the process to revise our 1987 forest plan in 2006 using the process and procedures in place at that time. We have made significant strides in articulating what the forests should be like in the future (desired conditions), what things are working and what are not based upon scientific inquiry (Comprehensive Evaluation Report), and extensive public input, all of which was used to determine the need for change in our new strategic plan.

In June, 2009 the US District Court in the Northern District of California ruled that the Forest Service cannot use the planning rule established in 2008. Instead, we will use the provisions of the 1982 planning rule (per the 2000 planning rule transition language). That change means the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests can still use much of what we have developed thus far in the revision process but we will now prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the revised forest plan, which will be signed by the Regional Forester, Corbin Newman. We will also undertake new analysis of certain subjects such as species viability and management indicator species.

We will soon publish a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register which will formally announce our intent to revise the forest plan using a different process and also to prepare an EIS. Since we have received many comments in the past several years, we are asking the public to send us written comments by February 1, 2010, only on any new issues or concerns. You can send those electronic comments to [asnf.planning@fs.fed.us](mailto:asnf.planning@fs.fed.us).

You will have another opportunity to visit with me and my staff about the revised forest plan this spring when we schedule our open house meetings. I hope to have a draft revised forest plan and a draft EIS available for review and comment by the fall of 2010 and a final revised forest plan and final EIS by summer, 2011. You can follow our progress also on the website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf/plan-revision/>.

I want to assure you that the designation of routes, trails, and areas for motorized vehicle travel are not considered during this plan revision process but are addressed in a separate and concurrent EIS for public motorized travel on these forests. You have been an important component of this revision process and I hope that you will continue to provide us with your comments and guidance. I expect the process to change somewhat in 2010 but we have learned to adapt so please be patient with our need to shift gears as often as needed.

Finally, on behalf of my fellow Forest Service employees, I want to wish you a Merry Christmas and a wonderful new year. Although there are diverse opinions about management of these forests, the common thread amongst us is the love for this land that we call the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. For more information about the plan revision process visit our website, e-mail us at [asnf.planning@fs.fed.us](mailto:asnf.planning@fs.fed.us), or call us at 928-333-4301.

*Chris Knopp*  
Forest Supervisor

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