

ASNF – Roads, Trails, Special Uses, Recreation and Scenery

ASNF Motorized Roads and Trails

ASNF Desired Conditions for Motorized Opportunities

- A maintained roads and motorized trail system is in place and provides for safety and access for the use (e.g., recreation, minerals, vegetation treatment, fire protection) of the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs.

Related Plan Content: Overall Ecosystem Health

Related Plan Content: Riparian Areas

Related Plan Content: Grasslands

Related Plan Content: Landscape Scale Disturbance Events

Related Plan Content: Dispersed Recreation

Roads and trails provide a variety of opportunities to view natural landscapes and wildlife.

ASNF Special Uses

ASNF direction for special uses – N/A

Managed Recreation

Overall Recreation Opportunities

Background for Overall Recreation Opportunities

The primary recreation activities are “relaxing and escaping the heat,” fishing, hiking, off-highway-vehicle (OHV) use, viewing natural features and wildlife, camping, driving for pleasure, picnicking, and large group gatherings. A wide variety of other activities, including boating and hunting, also occur on the forests. There are over 30 lakes and reservoirs and more than 1,000 miles of rivers and streams, more than can be found in any other national forest in the Southwestern Region. The forests are a destination for winter activities including snow play, snowmobiling, ice fishing, cross-country skiing, and sledding.

The Apache-Sitgreaves NFs receive approximately 2 million visitors per year. A high proportion of these visitors spend the night on the forests. Approximately 70 percent of the forests’ Arizona visitors are from the Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas. These visitors, including those that view wildlife, hunt, and fish, contribute significantly to the economic well-being of the surrounding areas. The forests’ contribution to the local economy from the recreation and wildlife areas is approximately 69 percent of the local jobs and 68 percent of the local labor income (Forest Service, 2009a).

Highway improvements provide easier access to the forests from Arizona’s major metropolitan areas, increasing the number of visitors and demand for recreation. The demographics of the recreating public are changing. An aging and urban population and increased ethnic diversity contribute to an increased demand for an array of recreation opportunities.

Forest managers face major challenges in providing quality recreation opportunities, maintaining a safe transportation system, and providing for resource protection.

Desired Conditions for Overall Recreation Opportunities

- The Apache-Sitgreaves NFs offer a spectrum of recreation settings and opportunities varying from primitive to rural and dispersed to developed, with an emphasis on the natural appearing character of the forests.
- Inventoried roadless areas (IRAs) maintain their overall roadless character.
- Recreation activities occur within the ability of the land to support them and with minimal user conflicts.
- Recreation enhances the quality of life for local residents (e.g., social interaction, physical activity, connection with nature), provides tourist destinations, and contributes monetarily to local economies.
- Recreation opportunities provide for a variety of skill levels, needs, and desires in partnership with recreation permit holders, private entities, volunteer groups, community groups, and State, Federal, and tribal governments.
- Visitors can easily access information about recreation activities and safe and proper use of the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs.
- Recreation use does not negatively affect wildlife habitat and populations. Negative interactions between people and wildlife are minimized.
- The Apache-Sitgreaves NFs are free from vandalism and refuse.
- Recreation use does not negatively affect the use and character of cultural resources.
- “Leave No Trace” principles are practiced.

Related Plan Content for Overall Recreation Opportunities

See the following sections: Soil, Riparian Areas, Water Resources, Wildlife and Rare Plants, Dispersed Recreation, Developed Recreation, Motorized Opportunities, Nonmotorized Opportunities, Scenic Byways, National Recreation Trails, Eligible and Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers, Scenic Resources, Conservation Education, Cultural Resources, Special Uses, Wilderness, Primitive Area, and Recommended Wilderness.

ASNF Dispersed Recreation

ASNF Desired Conditions for Dispersed Recreation – N/A

ASNF Desired Conditions for Overall Recreation Opportunities

Inventoried roadless areas (IRAs) maintain their overall roadless character.

ASNF Scenic Resources

Desired Conditions for Scenic Resources

- The Apache-Sitgreaves NFs appear predominantly natural, and human activities do not dominate the landscape.

- The natural and cultural features of the landscapes that provide a “sense of place” are intact.
- Landscapes possess vegetation patterns and compositions that are naturally variable in appearance and ecological function and contribute to scenic values.
- Visitors have opportunities to experience important scenic elements including fall colors, rolling grasslands, picturesque vistas, and green riparian corridors.
- Lakes (reservoirs) and surrounding lands (¼ mile from the shore) provide landscapes which vary from slightly altered where human activities may be seen but do not attract attention (moderate scenic integrity) to natural appearing where human activities do not stand out (high scenic integrity).
- The scenic vistas associated with canyons and other landforms retain their scenic integrity.
- The vistas—both from and onto—the Mogollon Rim exhibit landscapes which vary from natural appearing where human activities do not stand out (high scenic integrity) to unaltered where generally only ecological changes occur (very high scenic integrity).

Eligible and Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers

Background for Eligible and Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers

There are no designated wild and scenic rivers¹ on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. However, the forests have over 20 eligible rivers and 2 suitable rivers, which reflects the importance of water and its presence on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs. Eligible and suitable wild and scenic rivers are considered special areas by the Forest Service.

There are approximately 339 miles of 23 rivers that are eligible to be included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (table 1). There are 172 miles classified as wild, 66 miles classified as scenic, and 101 miles classified as recreational. These rivers are located in all ranger districts except Lakeside.

Eligible rivers are managed to retain their status until a suitability determination has been made whether to recommend their inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Suitable rivers on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs include portions of the Blue River and KP Creek (table 2). These rivers were found to be suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System through a separate environmental analysis (Forest Service, 2010b). Suitable rivers are managed to maintain their conditions and values until congressional action is taken. One-half mile wide corridors, one-quarter mile on each side of eligible and suitable rivers, are managed to protect the identified river values.

Table 1. Eligible wild and scenic rivers of the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs by river classification

Bear Wallow Creek	3.7	–	0.9	4.6
Black River	18.3	0.5	–	18.8
Campbell Blue Creek ^b	4.1	–	8.0	12.1
Coal Creek ^b	9.6	0.6	7.7	17.9

¹ Designated wild and scenic rivers are those that are included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Dix Creek	–	3.3	–	3.3
Eagle Creek	–	–	19.5	19.5
East Clear Creek ^c	–	21.2	–	21.2
East Eagle Creek	7.5	3.5	3.5	14.5
East Fork Black River	3.3	1.2	8.2	12.7
East Fork Little Colorado River	–	9.3	–	9.3
Fish Creek	–	9.9	0.6	10.5
Little Blue Creek	18.4	–	–	18.4
Leonard Canyon ^d	–	–	23.6	23.6
North Fork East Fork Black River	12.7	1.0	–	13.7
Pigeon Creek	4.8	–	10.3	15.1
San Francisco River	9.0	–	15.0	24.0
Sardine Creek	8.9	–	–	8.9
South Fork Little Colorado River	–	7.3	–	7.3
Turkey Creek	9.1	–	–	9.1
West Fork Black River	8.6	3.0		11.6
West Fork Little Colorado River	6.4	–	1.7	8.1
Willow Creek	18.9	–	–	18.9
Woods Canyon – Chevelon Creek	28.4	5.3	2.4	36.1
Total Miles	171.7	66.1	101.4	339.2

^a Forest Service, 2009b

^b Also located on the Gila NF. Total miles shown.

^c Also located on the Coconino NF. A portion of this river is the boundary between the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs and the Coconino NF. Miles shown are the common boundary.

^d Also located on the Coconino NF. Miles shown are the common boundary between the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs and the Coconino NF.

Table 2. Suitable wild and scenic rivers of the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs by river classification

Blue River	23.3	4.2	–	27.5
KP Creek	11.3	–	–	11.3
Total Miles	34.6	4.2	0.0	38.8

Portions of the eligible West Fork and East Fork Little Colorado Rivers are located within Mount Baldy Wilderness. All of the eligible Bear Wallow Creek is within Bear Wallow Wilderness. There are no eligible or suitable rivers in Escudilla Wilderness. A portion of the suitable Blue River is within the Primitive Area Management Area. Most of the suitable KP Creek is also within the Primitive Area Management Area; the remainder is within the Natural Landscape Management Area. Other eligible rivers are located within a variety of management areas across the forests.

Desired Conditions for Eligible and Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers

- Eligible and suitable wild river segments display unaltered landscapes where generally only ecological changes occur (very high scenic integrity) and provide primitive and/or semiprimitive nonmotorized recreation opportunities.
- Eligible and suitable scenic river segments display landscapes which vary from slightly altered where human activities may be seen but do not attract attention (moderate scenic integrity) to natural appearing where human activities do not stand out (high scenic integrity) and provide semiprimitive nonmotorized, semiprimitive motorized, and/or roaded natural recreation opportunities.
- Eligible and suitable recreational river segments display landscapes which vary from moderately altered where human activities are evident (low scenic integrity) to slightly altered where human activities may be seen but do not attract attention (moderate scenic integrity) and provide primitive, semiprimitive nonmotorized, semiprimitive motorized, and/or roaded natural recreation opportunities.

Related Plan Content for Eligible and Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers

See the following sections: All PNVTs, Wilderness, and Primitive Area.