ASNF Cultural Resources

Background for Cultural Resources

The Apache-Sitgreaves NFs' heritage program manages the cultural resources of the forests. The lands of the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs contain a long and diverse cultural record that began approximately 12,000 years ago. Remnants of past and current human activities and events that reflect continuous use by Native peoples and the exploration, settlement, and management by Euro-American cultures can be found throughout the forests. Based on inventory surveys, it is estimated that approximately 100,000 archaeological sites are located on the forests. As of 2011, approximately 385,300 acres had been intensively surveyed for cultural resources resulting in the identification of over 6,900 sites. Many of these sites have been determined as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). At present, 10 properties are listed on the National Register. The forests also contain cultural landscapes, prehistoric trails, and historic routes and trails.

Properties presently listed on the National Register of Historic Places include Bailey Ruin, Bear Mountain Lookout, Butterfly Lodge, Deer Springs Lookout, Lake Mountain Lookout, Los Burros Ranger Station, Pinedale Ranger Station, Promontory Butte Lookout, PS Knoll Lookout, and Water Canyon Administrative Site.

In addition, lands and resources are considered traditionally significant to all American Indian tribes associated with the lands of the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs: Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Zuni, San Carlos Apache Tribe, Tonto Apache Tribe, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Yavapai-Apache Nation, and Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe, and in some cases, specific resources or areas are considered sacred by one or more tribes. Traditional cultural places and use areas are cultural historic properties that may be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places.

Cultural resources are nonrenewable with few exceptions. Once the resource has been disturbed, damaged, altered, or removed, nothing can recover the information that could have been gained through analysis or replace the opportunity for individuals to understand and experience the site. Forest Service management activities, public use, and natural processes have impacted cultural resources. Damage from vandalism (e.g., pilfering) continues to be a management issue. Current forest management practices minimize or avoid impacts to cultural resources.

ASNF Desired Conditions for Cultural Resources

Significant cultural resources (i.e., archaeological, historic, traditional cultural properties (TCPs), and known American Indian sacred sites) are preserved and protected for their cultural importance and are free from adverse impacts.

Heritage programs, interpretive presentations, brochures, or displays are available to provide opportunities for public use, understanding, and enjoyment of the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs' cultural resources.

Eligible and historically-significant[24] cultural properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Related Plan Content:

Recreation – N/A

Dispersed Recreation – N/A

Non-motorized opportunities – N/A

Motorized Opportunities – See below

American Indian Rights and Interests – See below

Forest Products – See Below

Livestock Grazing – N/A

Minerals and Geology – See Wildlife and Rare Plants for caves/bats and relation to cultural resources

Wildland Fire Management – See below

Motorized Opportunities

Background for Motorized Opportunities

Over 2,900 miles of roads and trails are open for public motorized use. These roads and trails are also needed for forest management or administrative use. Summers, holidays, and hunting seasons generally have high volumes of motor vehicle traffic. OHV use continues to increase. Unauthorized (user-created) routes and motorized use on closed roads are major concerns.

Desired Conditions for Motorized Opportunities

- A maintained road 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.
- Users have opportunities for motorized access and travel on a system of designated NFS roads, NFS motorized trails, and motorized areas[1].
- The transportation system provides a variety of recreation opportunities including varying degrees of difficulty, from OHV trails to paved scenic byways, while limiting resource and/or user conflicts.
- NFS roads, motorized trails, and motorized areas are easily identified on the ground (e.g., well marked).
- The road and trail system is accessible from local communities, State, county, and local public roads and trails.
- Loop trails exist for motorized trail users.
- Tread Lightly!® principles are commonly practiced.
- The location and design of roads and trails does not impede wildlife and fish movement.

[1] The Apache-Sitgreaves NFs will designate NFS roads, NFS motorized trails, and motorized areas through a separate travel management analysis.

Related Plan Content for Motorized Opportunities

See the following sections: Soil, Riparian Areas, Water Resources, All PNVTs, Wildlife and Rare Plants, Overall Recreation Opportunities, Scenic Byways, and Cultural Resources.

American Indian Rights and Interests

Background for American Indian Rights and Interests

American Indian tribes are sovereign nations. The United States has a fiduciary relationship with tribal governments as set forth in the U.S. Constitution, treaties, statutes, executive orders, court decisions, and agreements. This relationship is also known as the Federal Trust Duty to American Indians. Therefore, the Forest Service has certain responsibilities to American Indian tribes to fulfill the government's Federal Trust Duty. In meeting these responsibilities, the Forest Service must administer their programs in a manner that does not interfere with tribal rights and resources. When American Indian tribes ceded lands to the United States government, rights and privileges to off-reservation lands were reserved for their tribal members. Culturally affiliated tribes retain rights to use Apache-Sitgreaves NFs' lands in ways that are not allowed to the general public. Access or use by the general public may be temporarily denied to allow tribal members to exercise their rights and interests in privacy and solitude.

Forest managers are required to consult tribes when proposed policies or management actions may affect their interests. Nine federally recognized tribal governments, representing five American Indian tribes, have aboriginal territories and traditional ties to the lands now administered by the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs: Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Zuni, San Carlos Apache Tribe, Tonto Apache Tribe, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Yavapai-Apache Nation, and Yavapai-Prescott Tribe. Each tribe has their own history, traditions, and relationship to the land and other groups. The lands and resources of the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs have been used and continue to be used by many of the tribes for a variety of traditional cultural and religious activities. Past and current consultations with tribes have identified places and properties of religious and cultural use. These places are ethnographically important to tribal values and are inseparable from their cultures.

The better known TCPs, sacred sites, or areas known to have been used and/or continue to be used for traditional cultural purposes include, but are not limited to, Escudilla Mountain, Mount Baldy, Greens Peak, Rose Peak, Gobbler Peak, St. Peters Dome, Burro Mountain, Antelope Mountain, Pole Knoll, Flume Mountain, SU Knoll, Head of Chevelon Canyon, Chevelon Butte, areas near Aspen Lake, numerous springs, caves, and the Little Colorado River. Many other areas located on the forests are used for traditional cultural purposes but have not been specifically identified. Additional areas may be identified through project or permit specific tribal consultation. Therefore, the inventory of known TCPs, sacred sites, and areas used for traditional cultural purposes is subject to change, and the list will be updated as needed. Forest managers confer with the forest heritage program manager or forest tribal liaison for more specific information.

Desired Conditions for American Indian Rights and Interests

- Members of affiliated tribes have access to gather forest resources and products for traditional cultural purposes[28] (e.g., medicinal plants, boughs, basket materials, pollen, plants and minerals for pigments).
- Traditionally used resources are not depleted and are available for future generations.

- Sacred sites and significant TCPs are accessible and free of adverse impacts allowing for culturally affiliated tribes to gather traditional forest products and conduct ceremonies.
- All sacred objects, human remains, funerary objects, and objects of cultural patrimony removed from lands of Apache-Sitgreaves NFs have been repatriated to the appropriate tribe.

Related Plan Content for American Indian Rights and Interests

See the following sections: Overall Recreation Opportunities, Cultural Resources, Forest Products, Special Uses, and Community-Forest Intermix.

Forest Products

Background for Forest Products

Forest products include wood (timber, biomass, firewood) and special forest products. Special forest products include floral greenery, Christmas trees and boughs, mushrooms, wildlings (transplanted trees, shrubs, or herbaceous plants), cones, medicinal plants, cuttings, herbs, nuts, berries, and decorative wood.

The total volume of wood products sold by the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs has fluctuated over time with an overall downward trend since the 1990s. Focus has shifted toward ecological restoration and reduction of wildfire hazard to communities by removing small diameter, insect-infested, and dead and dying trees. The forests encourage new wood product industries to utilize these products. Firewood harvest continues to be an important component of the local social and economic fabric.

Desired Conditions for Forest Products

- The Apache-Sitgreaves NFs provide a sustainable supply of forest products (e.g., small roundwood, sawlogs, biomass, firewood, cones, Christmas trees, wildings) to businesses and individuals within the capability of the land.
- The collection of live plants, mushrooms, and other forest products does not impact species persistence onsite.

Related Plan Content for Forest Products

See the following sections: Overall Ecosystem Health, All PNVTs, Forests: All Forested PNVTs, Woodlands: All Woodland PNVTs, Wildlife and Rare Plants, American Indian Rights and Interests, Landscape Scale Disturbance Events, and Special Uses.

Wildland Fire Management

Background for Wildland Fire Management

Fire has played an important ecological role in shaping the vegetation on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs. The PNVTs are adapted to recurring wildfires started by lightning from spring and early summer thunderstorms. The condition and structure of several PNVTs have changed from reference conditions and, as a result, are departed from desired conditions. More information about ecological conditions can be found in the background sections for each PNVT.

There are five natural fire regimes based on average number of years between fires (fire frequency) combined with the severity of the fire on the dominant overstory vegetation (see table 3 below). They are:

- **Fire regime I:** 0- to 35-year frequency and low (surface fires most common) to mixed severity (less than 75 percent of the dominant overstory vegetation replaced);
- **Fire regime II:** 0- to 35-year frequency and high (stand replacement) severity (greater than 75 percent of the dominant overstory vegetation replaced);
- **Fire regime III:** 35- to 100+-year frequency and mixed severity (less than 75 percent of the dominant overstory vegetation replaced);
- **Fire regime IV:** 35- to 100+-year frequency and high (stand replacement) severity (greater than 75 percent of the dominant overstory vegetation replaced);
- **Fire regime V:** 200+-year frequency and high (stand replacement) severity.

Table 3. Fire regimes by PNVTs on the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs

Ponderosa Pine Forest	I
Dry Mixed Conifer Forest	I
Wet Mixed Conifer Forest[a]	III
Spruce-Fir Forest	III, IV
Madrean Pine-Oak Woodland	I
Piñon-Juniper Woodland[b]	I, II, III, IV, V
Interior Chaparral	IV
Great Basin Grassland	I
Semi-desert Grassland	I, II
Montane/Subalpine Grasslands	I, II
Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest[c]	I, III
Mixed Broadleaf Deciduous Riparian Forest[c]	I, III
Montane Willow Riparian Forest[c]	I, III
Wetland/Cienega Riparian Areas[c]	I, III

[a] Within wet mixed conifer, fire regime IV and V may occur; however, it is rare.

[b] Within piñon-juniper, fire regime I is found in piñon-juniper savanna; II, III, IV, and V are found in piñon-juniper persistent woodland.

[c] Wetland/cienega riparian areas and mixed broadleaf deciduous, montane willow, and cottonwood-willow riparian forests' historic and current fire return intervals are strongly influenced by surrounding PNVTs and their fire regime.

Today, the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs contain many more young trees and changes in species composition in all PNVTs than were historically present. With more continuous canopy cover, ladder fuels, and accumulated live and dead woody material, the probability of large, uncharacteristic, stand-replacing fires continues to increase. These fires burn with more intensity and severity; cause higher tree mortality; degrade watersheds; sterilize soils; and threaten adjacent communities, forest infrastructure, and wildlife habitat. Examples of uncharacteristic wildfires include the 2002 Rodeo-Chediski Fire and 2011 Wallow Fire.

Guidance for the Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (Forest Service and DOI, 2009) provides for the consistent implementation of the 1995/2001/2003 Federal Fire Policy.

Wildland fire is defined as any non-structure fire that occurs in the wildland; it is categorized into two distinct types:

- Wildfires – Unplanned ignition of a wildland fire (e.g., fires caused by lightning or unauthorized and accidental human-caused fires) and escaped prescribed fires.
- Prescribed fires – Planned ignitions.

Federal fire policy requires that every area with burnable vegetation have a fire management plan (FMP). FMPs are strategic plans that outline a program to manage wildfires and prescribed fires within the planning area. FMPs and their associated programs and activities support the implementation of land management plans. FMPs are designed to adapt to changing conditions.

The Apache-Sitgreaves NFs' FMP provides for firefighter and public safety first; includes fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives; and addresses values to be protected and public health issues. The FMP helps guide fire managers in wildland fire decisionmaking. It provides information organized by fire management units (FMUs) based on specific vegetation, fuels conditions, and management emphases.

When appropriate weather and fuel moisture conditions exist, use of wildland fire is a cost-effective way to reduce the likelihood of uncharacteristic fire. The risk of uncharacteristic fire can be reduced when fires occur within historic fire regimes.

To achieve ecosystems that are resilient to fire disturbance, vegetation structure needs to be more consistent with desired conditions. In addition to fire treatments, activities such as thinning and tree harvesting are needed to reduce tree density and canopy cover and support the natural fire regime. Strategic placement and design of these treatments is key to minimizing the impact from fire on values to be protected more efficiently because these activities are costly and there is limited capacity to implement them.

Desired Conditions for Wildland Fire Management

- Human life, property, and natural and cultural resource are protected within and adjacent to NFS lands.
- Wildland fires burn within the range of frequency and intensity of natural fire regimes. Uncharacteristic high severity fires rarely occur and do not burn at the landscape scale.
- Wildland fire maintains and enhances resources and functions in its natural ecological role.
- For all PNVTs, the composition, cover, structure, and mosaic of vegetative conditions reduce uncharacteristic wildfire hazard to local communities and forest ecosystems.

Related Plan Content for Wildland Fire Management

See the following sections: Overall Ecosystem Health, Air, All PNVTs, Landscape Scale Disturbance Events, Conservation Education, Scenic Resources, and Community-Forest Intermix Management Area.

Community-Forest Intermix

Background for Community-Forest Intermix

The Community-Forest Intermix Management Area consists of National Forest System (NFS) lands that are within one-half mile of communities-at-risk. Due to the threat of fire moving into or from developed

areas, higher levels of management may be needed to restore fire-adapted ecosystems, including regular maintenance. This management area may act as a zone in which fire suppression activities can be safely and effectively conducted. Likewise, it can act as a buffer to protect forest resources.

The Community-Forest Intermix Management Area makes up a portion of the wildland-urban interface (WUI). The WUIs were identified in community wildfire protection plans (CWPPs) and may be located in several management areas. A WUI includes areas around human development at imminent risk from wildfire.

Desired Conditions for Community-Forest Intermix

- The Community-Forest Intermix Management Area is composed of smaller, more widely spaced groups of trees than the general forest. These conditions result in fires that burn primarily on the forest floor and rarely spread as crown fire.
- There is legal and adequate access to public lands for resource management and recreation.
- As a result of forest management, most wildfires are low to mixed severity surface fires resulting in limited loss of structures or ecosystem function.
- Residents and visitors are knowledgeable regarding wildfire protection of their homes and property, defensible space, and appropriate uses of the forests.
- These areas provide a safer firefighting environment than the general forest.
- Native grasses, forbs, shrubs, and litter (i.e., fine fuels) are abundant enough to maintain and support natural fire regimes, protect soils, and support water infiltration.

The composition, density, structure, and mosaic of vegetative conditions reduce uncharacteristic wildfire hazard to local communities and forest ecosystems.

- Ponderosa pine and dry mixed conifer forest structure is similar to forestwide conditions or is composed of smaller and more widely spaced tree groups than in the general forest.
- Wet mixed conifer and spruce-fir PNVTs are growing in an overall more open condition than the wet mixed conifer PNVT outside of the Community-Forest Intermix Management Area. These conditions result in fires that burn primarily on the forest floor and rarely spread as crown fire.
- Where potential occurs, pure deciduous stands (e.g., aspen, Gambel oak) act as natural firebreaks and enhance scenery.
- Grasslands have less than 10 percent woody canopy cover.
- Piñon-juniper stands are represented by savanna-like conditions.
- The integrity of riparian areas is maintained.
- Vandalism and pilfering of heritage sites is uncommon.
- Landscapes in the Community-Forest Intermix Management Area vary from moderately altered where human activities are evident (low scenic integrity) to natural appearing where human activities do not stand out (high scenic integrity).
- Recreation opportunities range from roaded natural to rural.

Related Plan Content for Community-Forest Intermix

See these sections: All PNVTs, Scenic Resources, Lands, Cultural Resources, and American Indian Rights and Interests.

Related Forest Plan Content: Ecosystem Health

Desired Conditions for Overall Ecosystem Health

Landscape Scale Desired Conditions (10,000 acres or greater)

Ecological components are resilient to disturbances including human activities and climate variability.

Natural ecological processes (e.g., fire, drought, wind, insects, disease, pathogens) return to their innate role within the ecosystem. Fire, in particular, is restored to a more natural function.

Natural ecological processes allow for a shifting of plant communities, structure, and ages across the landscape. Ecotone shifts are influenced at both the landscape and watershed scale by ecological processes. The mosaic of plant communities and the variety within the communities are resilient to disturbances.

Ecological conditions for habitat quality, distribution, and abundance contribute to self-sustaining populations of native and desirable nonnative plants and animals that are healthy, well distributed, connected, and genetically diverse. Conditions provide for the life history, distribution, and natural population fluctuations of the species within the capability of the landscape.

Large blocks of habitat are interconnected, allowing for behavioral and predator-prey interactions, and the persistence of metapopulations and highly interactive wildlife species across the landscape. Ecological connectivity extends through all plant communities and ecotones.

Habitat configuration and availability allows wildlife populations to adjust their movements (e.g., seasonal migration, foraging) in response to climate change and promote genetic flow between wildlife populations.

Habitat quality, distribution, and abundance exist to support the recovery of federally listed species and the continued existence of all native and desirable nonnative species.

Healthy ecosystems provide a wide range of ecosystem services.

Watersheds exhibit high geomorphic, hydrologic, and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition.