

Summary of Modified Proposed Action Public Motorized Travel Management Plan Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

On October 10, 2007, the Federal Register published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Motorized Travel Management Plan on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (72 FR 57514-57517). The NOI, among other things, identified the purpose and need for the action, the scoping process, and summarized the proposed action. The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNFs) then hosted public meetings in five locations across the ASNFs to introduce the initial proposed action for designating a public motorized transportation system that would take effect during the fall, 2009.

After careful and deliberate consideration of input received during these meetings, the Forests Supervisor decided to modify the initial proposed action to ensure that all public comments collected during the collaborative pre-NEPA process had been considered and to ensure that each Ranger District was using the same general criteria for dispersed camping. The initial proposed action may be retained as an alternative that would be analyzed during the preparation of the EIS.

The ASNFs modified proposed action for a motorized public transportation system represents a synthesis of extensive public input and Forest Service specialist recommendations. Tables 1 and 2 identify the current and proposed management systems.

Table 1. The Modified Proposed Action in Comparison to the Current Road System on Each Ranger District, in miles. Existing miles are displayed in ().

Operational Maintenance Level	Alpine RD	Black Mesa	Clifton	Springerville	Lakeside	Forest Totals
Maintenance Level 1	937 (993)	1680 (1451)	34 (55)	452 (566)	307 (310)	3,409 (3,376)
Maintenance Level 2	325 (262)	742 (963)	238 (211)	384 (265)	267 (354)	1,956 (2,054)
Maintenance Level 3-5	189 (190)	286 (309)	5 (5)	129 (130)	86 (91)	695 (725)
Total Miles (ML 1-5)	1,451 (1,445)	2,708 (2,723)	277 (271)	965 (960)	660 (756)	6,060 (6,155)
Total Open Miles (ML 2-5)	514 (452)	1,028 (1,272)	243 (216)	513 (394)	353 (446)	2,651 (2,779)

ML 1 Roads: Closed to public motorized travel; emergency and administrative use only

ML 2 Roads: Open to all motorized vehicles unless posted otherwise

ML 3-5 Roads: Open to highway legal vehicles only

Table 2. The Modified Proposed Action in Comparison to the Existing Trail System on Each Ranger District, in miles. Existing miles are displayed in ().

Operational Maintenance Level	Alpine	Black Mesa	Clifton	Springerville	Lakeside	Forest Totals
ATV Routes (< 50" wide)	30 (0)	125 (38)	8 (0)	27 (21)	120 (96)	310 (155)

Summary of Modified Proposed Action

► The proposed motorized public transportation system was developed by closing approximately 438 miles of NFS roads that are currently open; opening approximately 371 miles of NFS roads currently closed or decommissioned; designating approximately 42 miles of existing trails and user created roads as NFS roads; converting approximately 93 miles of currently closed and open roads to ATV routes (vehicles ≤ 50" in width); and establishing approximately 55 miles of new ATV routes.

► Public motor vehicle use on the ASNFs will be permitted on roads and trails and in areas designated by vehicle class and during identified times of the year.

► Cross-country motorized travel would be permitted by written authorization issued under Federal law or regulations; Most roads not open to the public would continue to be available for permit holders, emergency use, and administrative use (agency needs, timber sales, mining, etc.).

► Most of the motorized roads & trails would occur on existing ASNFs routes that are currently managed as open to the public for motorized travel. This proposal also includes designation of some current user-created unauthorized routes to connect existing open routes.

► Off-road parking would be allowed within one vehicle length from the edge of the road surface along almost all of the designated open routes.

► Camping with vehicles would be permitted in designated dispersed camp sites that occur adjacent to designated routes. The ASNFs have identified approximately 1,692 currently used dispersed sites across the Forests.

► Camping with vehicles would be permitted in designated road corridors within 300' of either side of the road. Our proposal includes approximately 938 miles of corridors across the ASNFs.

► Cross-country motorized travel and camping would be allowed in eight designated Areas, on the Black Mesa and Lakeside Ranger Districts that total approximately 5,989 acres. The intent is to provide expanded motorized travel opportunities in areas with multiple campsites, but without a defined transportation system.

► Cross-country motorized big game retrieval, up to 1 mile from designated roads, would be allowed for elk and mule deer during early season hunts. CHAMP permit holders (AZGFD program for physically challenged hunters) would be allowed cross-country motorized big game retrieval for elk, mule deer, and black bear.