

Niche Statement: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

The Arizona Oasis – cool air, clear waters & snowy mountains

Cool temperatures, year-round lakes & streams, and scenic beauty characterize the Apache-Sitgreaves. A diverse wildlife population inhabits open meadows and forested mountains. Scenic roads and challenging trails provide visitors with connections to vast primitive and dispersed settings through out the forest. Picturesque settings range from high deserts to some of the highest mountain peaks in Arizona. Pre-historic Indians, Spanish and Mormon settlers, and modern-day snow-birds have shared the quality of life in the White Mountains.

Settings, Special Places, and Values

The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest is as diverse as Arizona – from north to south, the Forest is a recreationist's paradise in the arid southwest. The A-S has 450 miles of streams, 2,000 surface acres of lakes, and is part of the largest and most continuous ponderosa pine forest in the world. The prominent Mogollon Rim is a distinguishing feature of the Forest, defining a clear boundary between the deserts and the Colorado Plateau. Colorful rivers and tributaries flow through the Forest; the Black, Blue, San Francisco, and the Little Colorado. Mt. Baldy, Bear Wallow and Escudilla are mountainous Wildernesses. By contrast, the Blue Range Primitive Area is a river environment crisscrossed by trails and managed as a Wilderness.

Corridors - Low country to high country travel ways through scenic areas. Corridors start in the high deserts and move up through pinion-juniper, ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forests of the higher alpine elevations.

Dispersed – Remote canyons, large high elevation meadows, rivers, streams and lakes surrounded by forested mountains are less crowded. This setting is used primarily by visitors not wanting a lot of amenities. Locals also use this setting as their 'backyard' for short duration day-use activities.

Wilderness/Primitive - Wilderness values in relatively pristine settings that provide a sense of remoteness, solitude, and challenge.

Developed - Higher level services and amenities near lakes and streams providing creature comforts with a sense of safety and security.

Opportunities/Activities

Visitors choose to come to the Apache-Sitgreaves, not just for an escape, but to engage in a variety of activities. Visitors use the Forest as an overnight place to stay more than any other forest in the National Forest System. The Forest elevations provide respite from the heat of the summer desert, and snow play in the winter. The warm winter temperatures to the south and east allow summer-like recreation, all year round, while at the same time, visitors to the north experience winter recreation activities. Trophy hunting, wildlife viewing, and coldwater fishing are all part of the experience. Mt. Baldy is a sacred mountain for the Apache Indians.

Corridors – Scenic viewing, driving for pleasure, picnicking, and access to dispersed areas.

Dispersed – Designated dispersed, dispersed, and primitive camping, hiking, OHV riding, mountain biking, fishing, horseback riding, X-Country skiing (groomed and un-groomed), snowmobiling, hunting, and Interpretation & Education opportunities.

Wilderness/Primitive – Horseback riding, hiking, primitive camping, backpacking, fishing, hunting, and viewing wildlife.

Developed - Interpretation & Education opportunities, developed camping, boating, fishing, and picnicking,.