

## Roads

The Forest Service maintains miles of forest roads on the National Forests in Arkansas and Oklahoma. These roads serve as access for recreation use, hunting, fishing, fire control and other management activities.

Some roads that access the national forest cross private land on easements acquired from the private landowners. When the Forest Service acquires an easement across private property, the Forest Service regulates the use of the road. The private landowner should be aware that the public has the right to use the road unless the Forest Service has closed the road to public use.

Access across the national forest to private lands may be granted under limited circumstances. Submit proposals for access to private land across the national forest to the nearest Forest Service office.

## Wildfire Suppression

The Forest Service is responsible for protecting national forests from wildfire. The Arkansas Forestry Commission and Oklahoma Forestry Services suppress fires on state and private lands. The Forest Service suppresses fire on private land if it poses a threat to national forest land or when assistance is requested by other agencies.

If a property owner allows a fire to escape onto national forest land or if suppression activities are necessary by the Forest Service, the landowner may be billed for suppression and restoration costs and damages.

## Land Exchanges

The Forest Service occasionally exchanges land to consolidate national forest holdings or to acquire desirable tracts of land in the public interest. Criteria for those lands to be exchanged or acquired are included in the Forest Land Management Plan. All land exchange proposals are evaluated using these criteria, and those that offer the greatest public benefit and are financially feasible are considered.

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## Contact Your Forest

**Ozark-St. Francis Supervisor's Office**  
605 W Main  
Russellville AR 72801  
Phone: 479-964-7200

**Big Piney - Hector**  
Hector, AR  
479-284-3150

**Big Piney - Jasper**  
Jasper, AR  
870-446-5122

**Boston Mountain**  
Ozark, AR  
479-667-2191

**Magazine**  
Paris, AR  
479-963-3076

**Sylamore**  
Mountain View, AR  
870-269-3228

**St. Francis**  
Marianna, AR  
870-295-5278

**Pleasant Hill**  
Clarksville, AR  
479-754-2864

**Ouachita Forest Supervisor's Office**  
100 Reserve Street, PO Box 1270  
Hot Springs AR 71902  
Phone: 501-321-5202

**Caddo Office**  
Glenwood, AR  
870-356-4186

**Cold Springs Office**  
Booneville, AR  
479-675-3233

**Womble Office**  
Mount Ida, AR  
870-867-2101

**Jessieville Office**  
Jessieville, AR  
501-984-5313

**Hodgen Office**  
Hodgen, OK  
918-653-2991

**Winona Office**  
Perryville, AR  
501-889-5176

**Idabel Office**  
Idabel, OK  
580-286-6564

**Fourche Office**  
Danville, AR  
479-495-2884

**Talihina Office**  
Talihina, OK  
918-567-2326

**Mena Office**  
Mena, AR  
479-394-2382

**Poteau Office**  
Waldron, AR  
479-637-4174

**Oden Office**  
Oden, AR  
870-326-4322

## LIVING NEXT DOOR TO A NATIONAL FOREST



### *A Guide for Homeowners in Arkansas and Oklahoma*

OZARK-ST. FRANCIS NATIONAL FOREST  
OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST



U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
Southern Region

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[www.aokforests.com](http://www.aokforests.com)



# Welcome to the Neighborhood

For many people, having a piece of property next door to a national forest is the fulfillment of a dream. Living next to a national forest allows a homeowner to enjoy the beauty of the forest, the abundance of wildlife, the opportunity for spectacular scenery, and a sense of solitude.

At the same time, it is important for new property owners to understand what it means to live next door to public lands. National Forests are “working” forests managed for multiple uses, like wildlife, timber, water quality, range and recreation. Along with the many benefits of being a national forest neighbor, there also come a number of responsibilities.

This brochure provides information on a variety of topics that property owners should find useful. For additional information, contact the nearest Forest Service office.

## Permits

The Forest Service issues permits for collecting items like firewood, dead and down wood, rocks and pine straw. Individuals must obtain a permit before removing any product from public land. Collecting minor forest products for personal use may be permitted. Digging ginseng and moss on public land is not allowed. Contact the local district office to find out more.

## Special Use Permits

Private uses of the national forest, such as private road rights-of-way and construction of public utilities, require a special use permit. These permits may be issued if the use is compatible with national forest purposes and if it is in the public interest. Payment of an annual special use permit fee is required.

Other uses of the national forest such as recreation events and commercial outfitter or guiding services also require a special use permit, as do large gatherings of over 75 people. Permits are not granted when the activity can be reasonably accommodated on private land or if the occupancy would be permanent. Inquiries may be made in person or by writing to the Forest Service office where the proposed use would be located.

When the Forest Service accepts an application for a special use permit, processing the permit does take time and there are associated costs that may be billed to the applicant.



New home construction brings new neighbors to the national forest.

## Land Lines

Most national forest lands in Arkansas and Oklahoma were acquired in the early 1900s before either state began licensing land surveyors. Occasionally old property corners and boundary lines are found to be mislocated or obliterated enough to make resurveys necessary. Neighbors to a national forest are encouraged to keep structures and improvements a reasonable distance away from common property lines for several reasons. One is to reduce the likelihood for structure relocation in case a boundary needs to be corrected. Other reasons are to diminish damage from hazard trees on adjoining forest land and to improve wildfire protection.

Many surveys clear vegetation along traverse or trial lines before the true lines are located, and these lines may be mistaken for property lines. To ensure the correct identification of a boundary, please contact a licensed land surveyor or your local district office before beginning any clearing or construction near the property line. The Forest Service office will have on file both land title documents and past survey records to assist with boundary identification.

Property corners may be designated by a variety of objects including, but not limited to, iron pins or pipes, rock mounds perhaps with wood stakes and stamped monuments. Usually two or more marked and tagged witness trees reference a corner marker and descriptions of them are filed at the local district office. The Forest Service shares responsibility with neighbors in locating and protecting property corners and line markings along our common boundaries.

## Prescribed Fire

The Forest Service sometimes uses prescribed fire to accomplish certain management objectives. These objectives may include enhancing wildlife habitat, removal of debris or reducing the hazard of wildfire by clearing other flammable material that has accumulated on the forest floor.

Options do exist to partner with the Forest Service to conduct prescribed burning on private lands directly adjacent to the national forest. Contact your nearest district office for more information.

To learn about prescribed burns planned for your area, visit online at [www.aokforests.com](http://www.aokforests.com) or call the toll free prescribed fire line at 1-888-243-1042.

## Recreation

National forest recreation activities include camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, boating, horseback riding and much more. Property owners who live adjacent to the national forest should be aware that the public has the right to recreate on national forest land even when that land is adjacent to private property.

### Off-highway Vehicle (OHV) Use

All national forests must designate a system of routes, trails or areas for use by off-highway vehicles (OHVs). The Ozark-St. Francis designated routes became effective in January 2007. The Ouachita National Forest will have designated routes in place by October 2008. After these dates, OHVs may only operate on designated routes. Property owners should be aware that riding from private property to a designated route across the forest floor is prohibited.