

PUBLIC NOTICE

Opportunity to Comment on Apache Leap Special Management Area

The Tonto National Forest, Supervisor's Office, is preparing a management plan for the congressionally designated Apache Leap Special Management Area (SMA), located in Pinal County, 65 miles east of Phoenix, Arizona. The purpose of the proposed action is to develop and adopt long-range direction for managing the natural resources and human uses of the Apache Leap SMA consistent with Section 3003 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. 'Buck' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (NDAA) (Public Law [PL] 113–291). Approval of the Apache Leap management plan requires a concurrent forest plan amendment to add or modify one or more plan components, or to change where one or more plan components apply (36 CFR § 219.13(a)).

The 1985 Tonto Land and Resource Management Plan would be amended to: 1) include the Apache Leap SMA as a new management area (MA 2G Globe Ranger District - Apache Leap SMA); 2) modify the description and acreage of the former management area (MA 2F Globe Ranger District – General Management Area); and 3) incorporate new plan components that were developed to meet the primary purpose of the special management area. These plan components comprise chapter three of the proposed Apache Leap SMA management plan.

The latest version of the proposed Apache Leap SMA management plan is available to review online at: [\[http://www.apacheleapsma.us/public-involvement\]](http://www.apacheleapsma.us/public-involvement)

The new plan components that comprise the proposed forest plan amendment address various substantive requirements found at 36 CFR 219.8 thru 219.11 for managing the multiple uses and resources of a designated area.

How to Comment and Timeframe

We would like to hear your comments about amending the forest plan using the plan components identified for the management of the Apache Leap Special Management Area, a congressionally designated area as identified at 36 CFR 219.10 (b).

The 30-day comment period for this proposed amendment begins on the day after publication of this notice in the *Arizona Capitol Times*, the official newspaper of record, on June 30, 2017. This comment period is provided pursuant to 36 CFR 219.16(a)(2).

Comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this project and will be available for public inspection. Electronic comments must show name and address of submitter. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered. Additionally, any persons may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality (7 CFR 1.27(d)).

Written comments may be submitted in one of three ways – via US mail: Apache Leap SMA, PO Box 34468, Phoenix, AZ 85067-4468; using electronic inbox: comments@apacheleapsma.us; or in person: (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays) at 2324 E. McDowell Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85006.

Decisions Will Be Subject To Objection

The decision to approve the management plan for the Apache Leap SMA and concurrently amend the 1985 Tonto Land and Resource Management Plan is subject to the objection procedures identified in 36 CFR part 219 subpart B. According to 36 CFR 219.53(a), those who may file an objection are individuals and entities who have submitted substantive formal comments during opportunities provided for public comment during the planning and environmental review process for the decision. Only those who provide a substantive formal comment, as defined in 36 CFR 219.62, will be eligible to object to the proposed decision.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity provider and employer.