



Apache Leap Special Management Area

Planning Process

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2015 directs the Forest Service to prepare a management plan for the Apache Leap Special Management Area.

What is a Special Management Area?

Certain areas of National Forest System lands that contain special attributes merit special management. These Special Management Areas (SMA) are designated administratively or by law and are managed for their designation purpose. The NDAA designated the Apache Leap SMA and identifies the specific purpose(s) and authorized activities for the Apache Leap SMA.

The Tonto National Forest is preparing the Apache Leap SMA Management Plan under the direction of the NDAA. The plan will establish the desired conditions, objectives, standards, suitable uses, and authorized activities for the area. Upon approval, the management plan will become part of the Tonto's land management plan via the plan amendment process.

Planning Process and Schedule

September - December 2016	Forest Service to meet with representatives of the Town of Superior, Resolution Copper, affected Tribes, interested members of the public, and interested stakeholder groups for input on the Management Plan content
January - March 2017	Prepare Management Plan
March - April 2017	Public comment period for Management Plan Public Meeting in Superior, Arizona
 March - June 2017	Prepare Environmental Assessment for Management Plan
July - November 2017	Environmental Assessment Objection Period
December 2017	Issuance of Decision Notice



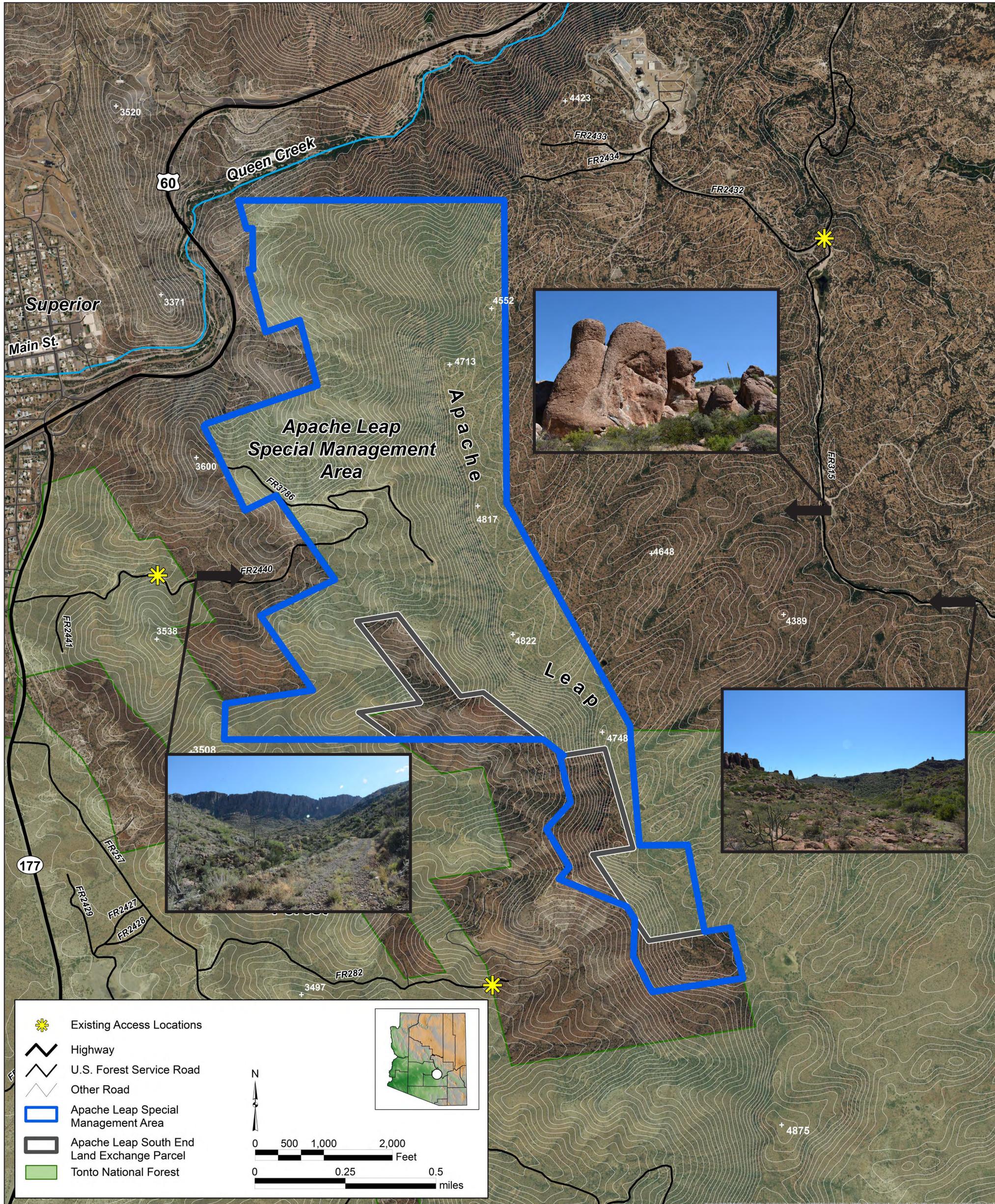
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The Purpose of the
Apache Leap Special Management Area
(*NDAA, Section 3003*)

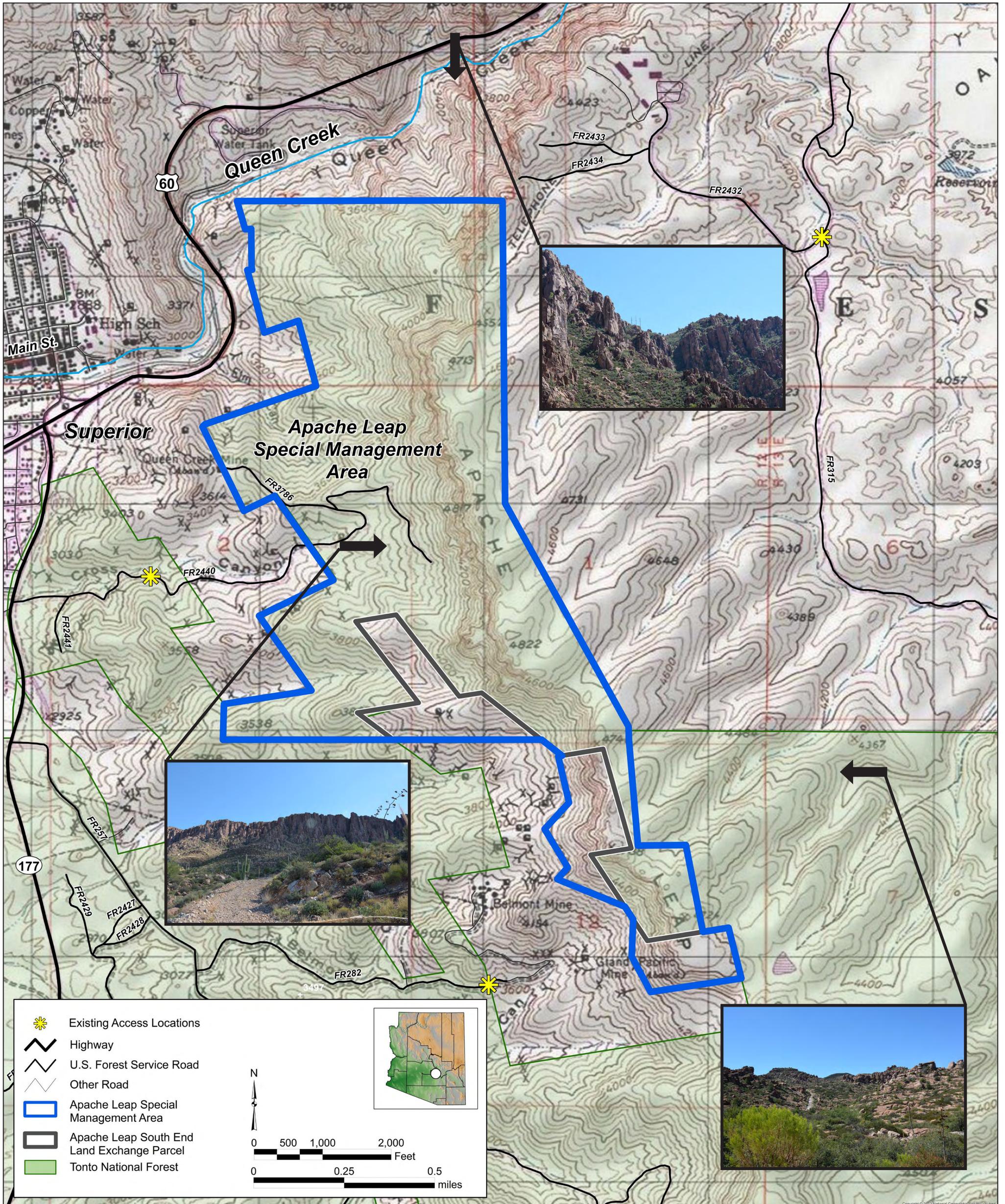
- to preserve the **natural character** of Apache Leap;
- to allow for **traditional uses** of the area by **Native American people**; and
- to protect and conserve the **cultural and archaeological** resources of the area.



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PLAN TOPIC	CURRENT MANAGEMENT	PROPOSED MANAGEMENT
Cultural / Historic	Cultural resources are managed consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), Forest Service manual (FSM 2360) and handbook direction, additional Executive Orders, and a Programmatic Agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office	Continues current management direction with these new items:
		Additional emphasis given to identifying and nominating cultural resources eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places
		Seeks input from Tribes for maintaining archaeological sites, traditional use areas, and natural resources
Natural Character and Scenery	Manage for some areas to appear natural and some areas to have significant deviations	Manage so the landscape appears natural with limited deviations
	Construction of new communications sites, utility lines, transmission lines is allowed	Construction of new communications sites, utility lines, transmission lines should not occur
	No seismic monitoring in place	Monitor for potential seismic impacts of proposed adjacent mining site
Recreation	Opportunities for dispersed recreation are available to the public	
	Manage for mix of 'Urban', 'Roaded Natural' and 'Semi-Primitive Motorized' levels on the recreation opportunity spectrum	Manage for 'Semi-Primitive Non-motorized' to protect natural character and values while allowing for recreational use
	Overnight camping is permitted	Overnight camping is prohibited
Mineral Resources	Area is open to mineral exploration and development	Area is withdrawn from mineral entry and development
	Abandoned mining infrastructure poses potential public safety hazard	Public safety hazards are mitigated within 5 years of detection
Wildlife	Manage to provide habitat for various animal species.	
Vegetation	Manage to promote natural ecological processes and limit undesirable nonnative species	
Public Access	Roads and trail access follows current Forest Service designations, consistent with the protection of scenic and cultural/historic values.	
Livestock Grazing	Grazing continues on Devil's Canyon allotment	
	Grazing occurs on Superior allotment	Grazing removed from Superior allotment
Wildland Fire	Manage to protect human life, property, and natural and cultural resources.	
	Manage to sustain resources and natural ecological function.	



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Suitability of Lands

Suitability of lands refers to the appropriateness of applying certain resource management practices to a particular area of land, in consideration of the relevant social, economic, and ecological factors. Suitability determinations are one of the decisions made as part of creating a management plan. The table below shows which uses have been determined suitable for the Apache Leap SMA.

Suitable: The area or site is appropriate for the activity, whether the opportunity is available or not.

Not Suitable: The area or site is not appropriate for the activity or the activity is not allowed by law or regulation within the area.

West Apache Leap: the Apache Leap escarpment and the area west of the escarpment; characterized by sheer cliff faces, hoodoos, buttresses, and steep slopes, significantly more rugged and less accessible than East Apache Leap.

East Apache Leap: the area east of the Apache Leap escarpment; includes the area on top of the escarpment, which gradually slopes down toward Oak Flat.

Land Use Categories					
	Livestock Grazing	Motorized Vehicle Use	Timber Production	Utility Corridors	Mining
	See Section 3.8 for detailed plan components related to livestock grazing	See Section 3.7 for detailed plan components related to public access	The National Forest Management Act requires that lands be classified as suitable/not suitable for timber production	See Section 3.2 for further detail on how utility corridors relate to natural character and scenery	See Section 3.10.1 for an overview of the NDAA legislation that withdraws the area from future mining
East Apache Leap	Suitable Devil's Canyon allotment is suitable for grazing	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Suitable A utility corridor currently exists in east Apache Leap SMA	Not Suitable
West Apache Leap	Not Suitable Superior allotment is not suitable for grazing.	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Not Suitable A utility corridor does not exist in east Apache Leap SMA, and additional utility corridors would not be suitable	Not Suitable

Suitable Uses Designated by Legislation

The NDAA (legislation creating the Apache Leap SMA) allows several uses by law related to public safety and monitoring concerns associated with the proposed adjacent mine, including the:

- installation of seismic monitoring equipment;
- necessary measures for public safety (e.g., fences, signs, etc.); and
- the operation of an underground tunnel beneath the Apache Leap SMA.



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Management Plan Components

The Forest Service has completed a draft of the Apache Leap Special Management Area Management Plan. The purpose of the plan is to establish a comprehensive approach to managing the natural character of Apache Leap and its values, as specified in the NDAA.

The components of the Apache Leap Special Management Area Management Plan include the desired conditions, objectives, standards, and guidelines for the area. The definitions for each of these components are:

<p>Desired Conditions</p>	<p>A desired condition is a description of specific social, economic, and/or ecological characteristics of the plan area, or a portion of the plan area, toward which management of the land and resources should be directed.</p>	
<p>Objectives</p>	<p>An objective is a concise, measurable, and time-specific statement of a desired rate of progress toward a desired condition or conditions.</p>	
<p>Standards</p>	<p>A standard is a mandatory constraint on project and activity decision-making, established to help achieve or maintain the desired condition or conditions, to avoid or mitigate undesirable effects, or to meet applicable legal requirements.</p>	
<p>Guidelines</p>	<p>Guidelines are established to help achieve or maintain a desired condition or conditions, to avoid or mitigate undesirable effects, or to meet applicable legal requirements.</p>	



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Management Plan Components CULTURAL / HISTORIC

<h3>Desired Conditions</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors to the Apache Leap SMA are aware of the cultural and historic values present, the role of human activity in shaping the landscape of the area, and the importance of protecting these resources. • Heritage resources are preserved in place wherever feasible. Archaeological sites are protected from vandalism, looting, and other forms of unnatural deterioration. Excessive forms of natural deterioration such as gully erosion and animal burrowing that threaten the integrity of features or cultural deposits are rare or not evident on the landscape. Adverse effects from management activities, visitor impacts, and damaging levels of natural deterioration are mitigated. • The significance of the historic and cultural resources of the Apache Leap SMA is recognized in nomination(s) for the National Register of Historic Places.
<h3>Objectives</h3>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As additional cultural resources not currently included in the existing Historic District are determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nomination(s) are prepared and submitted to the Keeper of the National Register for consideration in the National Register of Historic Places within 5 years of initial determination of eligibility.
<h3>Standards</h3>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include tribal input on standards for maintaining the archaeological sites, traditional use areas, and natural resources (e.g., monitoring strategies).
<h3>Guidelines</h3>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If historic properties or traditional use areas are found to be impacted by recreation or other allowable uses, temporary closures to protect the affected sites or use areas should be employed until restorative measures can be identified and implemented. 2. When access to traditional use areas by tribal members is hampered by land exchanges, road decommissioning, or other actions outside and adjacent to the Apache Leap SMA, the responsible line officer will work with tribes, landowners, and other pertinent agencies to allow reasonable access while protecting the natural character and values of the Apache Leap SMA.
<h3>Management Approaches</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a framework to inventory archaeological and cultural sites, traditional tribal use areas, and places of traditional or religious significance as opportunities are presented. • Develop a monitoring strategy and timeline to ensure that historic properties and traditional resources are protected from vandalism, looting, and other forms of unnatural deterioration. Consider implementing actions to secure and stabilize sites, including temporary closures pending assessment and determination of appropriate actions to protect the sites or traditional use areas. • Provide a mitigation strategy specific to the management area that limits significant impacts to historic and cultural properties, should additional mitigation measures be necessary.W





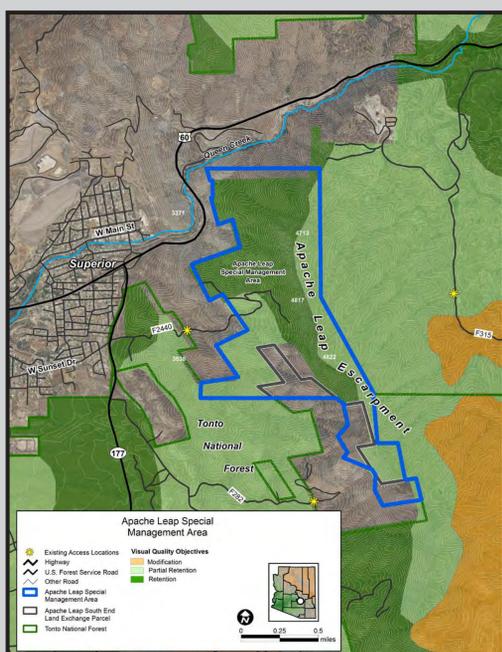
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Management Plan Components NATURAL CHARACTER AND SCENERY

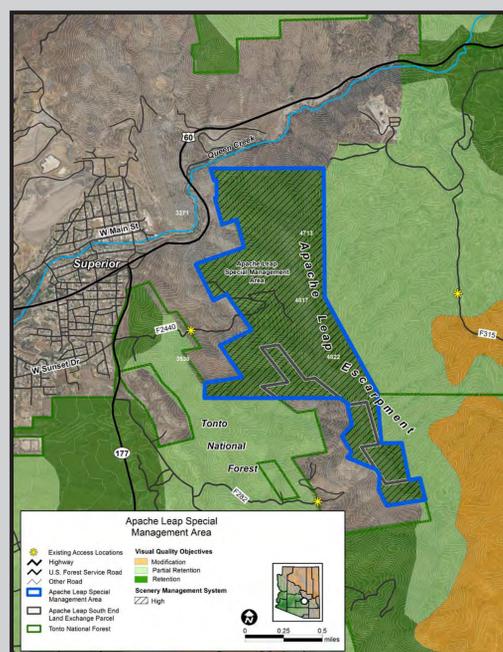
<h2>Desired Conditions</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The landscape appears natural within the context of native vegetation and landforms and remains generally unaltered by human activity. Deviations from the natural landscape are limited and may include valued cultural landscape features and essential management elements that blend with the natural landscape. Natural character and scenery is consistent with 'High' scenic integrity according to the scenery management system, or the 'Retention' visual quality objective according to the visual management system (Forest Service, 1995), throughout the Apache Leap SMA. The Apache Leap SMA is maintained in a substantially natural condition for use and enjoyment by the public while protecting those special characteristics for which it was designated.
<h2>Standards</h2>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Natural character and associated values, including natural quiet, dark skies, and limited encounters with other visitors, shall take precedence over recreation uses where conflicts occur.
<h2>Guidelines</h2>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All proposed developments (including vegetation manipulation and ground-disturbing activities/construction) should be designed to blend with the natural setting by remaining consistent with the form, line, color, texture, and pattern common to the landscape character. Construction of new communications sites, utility lines, or transmission lines should not occur within the Apache Leap SMA. Regular maintenance activities, such as access and line clearing, should be performed in a manner consistent with protection of the natural character and values of Apache Leap SMA. If monitoring indicates that the natural character or values of the Apache Leap SMA are being negatively impacted, rehabilitation and closures may be used to mitigate impacts. Apache Leap SMA should be managed for the visual quality objective of 'Retention' under the visual management system and a scenic integrity objective of 'High' under the scenery management system.
<h2>Management Approaches</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a monitoring strategy in consultation with Resolution Copper mining engineers and geologists to address the question: Do seismic conditions pose a risk to public safety or disturb the natural character, cultural, and historic resources of the Apache Leap SMA? The monitoring strategy should locate seismic monitoring equipment on the surface and subsurface as needed to continually monitor seismic activity.

Visual / Scenery Management

The Visual Management System (VMS) was developed by the Forest Service in 1974 to integrate visual/scenery considerations into resource management decisions. Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) are a component of the VMS. The Forest Service updated the VMS to the Scenery Management System (SMS) in 1996. The SMS provides an updated systematic approach for determining the relative value and importance of scenery in National Forest lands. The current Tonto National Forest Land Management Plan uses the VMS system. However, the plan is currently under revision and will transition to the newer Scenery Management System in the future.



Existing Visual Quality Objectives (VQO)



Proposed VQO and Scenery Management System (SMS)

Proposed Visual Quality Objective

Retention provides for management activities that are not visually evident. Under 'Retention', activities may only repeat form, line, color and texture that are frequently found in the characteristic landscape. Changes in qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., should not be evident.

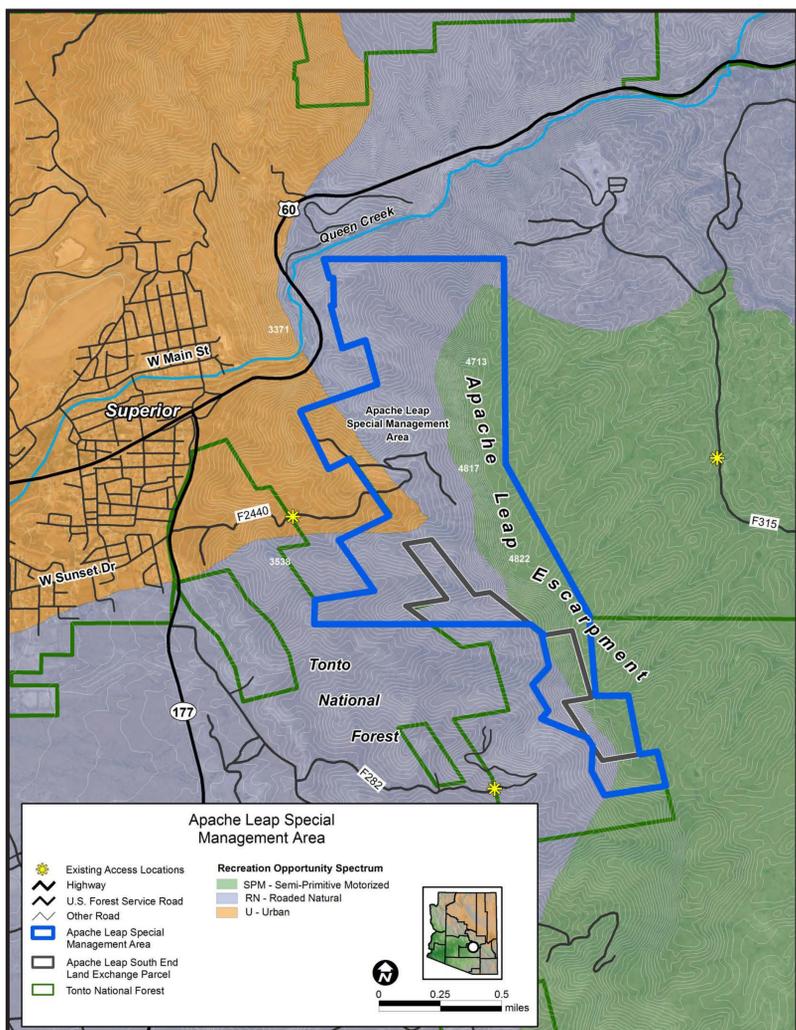
Proposed Scenery Management System

High scenic integrity refers to landscapes where the valued landscape character "appears" intact. Deviations may be present but must repeat the form, line, color, texture, and pattern common to the landscape character so completely and at such scale that they are not evident.

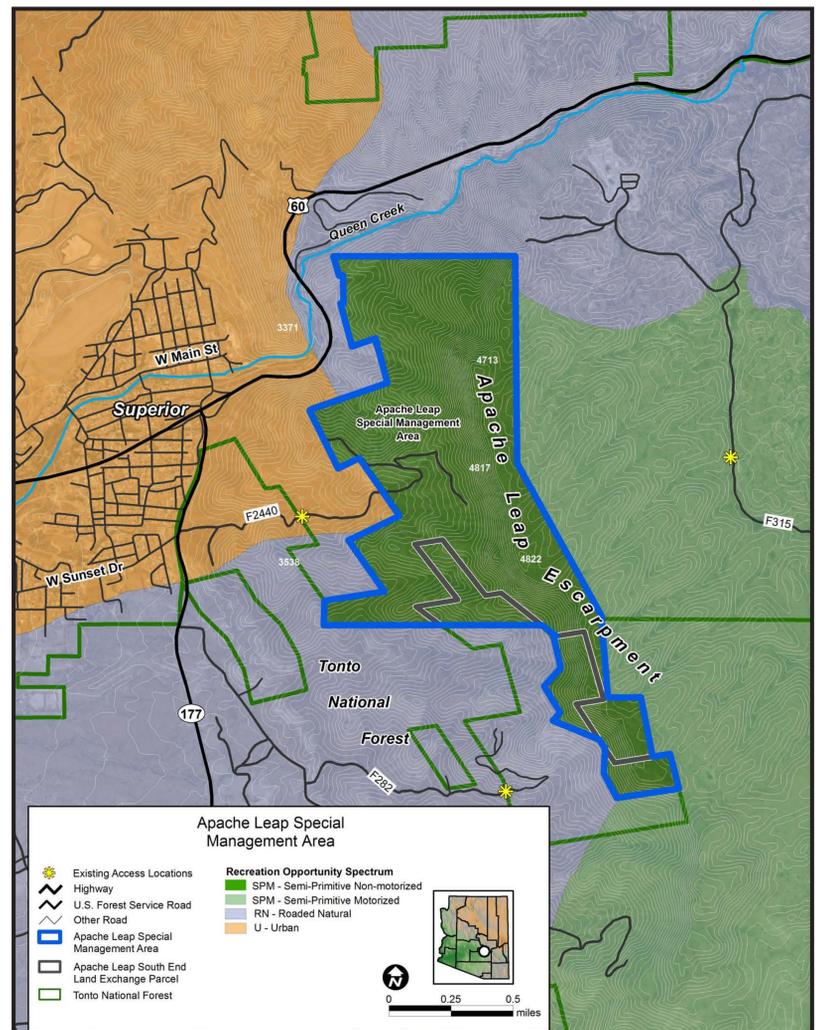
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Management Plan Components RECREATION

<h3>Desired Conditions</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Apache Leap SMA offers dispersed recreation opportunities that emphasize non-motorized recreation. Recreation activities occur at appropriate locations and intensities such that cultural and natural values are protected. Recreation opportunities and activities are primarily nature based and offer opportunities for experiencing scenic beauty, and the intrinsic cultural and natural resources associated with the Apache Leap SMA. Recreation-related project-level decisions and implementation activities should be consistent with mapped classes and setting descriptions. Recreation opportunities associated with the Apache Leap SMA enhance the quality of life for local residents (e.g., social interaction, physical activity, connection with nature), provides tourist destinations, and contributes monetarily to local economies. Facilities for dispersed recreation activities are appropriate for the recreation opportunity spectrum class and scenic integrity objective of the location and are designed to the minimum necessary to protect natural and cultural resources. Day use recreation opportunities are offered within a predominantly undeveloped setting. Overnight camping is prohibited. Recreation user conflicts are minimal.
<h3>Objectives</h3>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Within three years of plan approval, establish a closure order for motorized recreation activities and overnight camping under Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 261—Prohibitions.
<h3>Standards</h3>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overnight camping is prohibited.
<h3>Guidelines</h3>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Where agency or applicant objectives can be met outside of the designated area, special use permits should not be issued for the Apache Leap SMA. Trail construction and maintenance work and structures should blend with the natural setting to the greatest extent possible without compromising their function or resource benefit. The Apache Leap SMA should be managed for recreational settings consistent with the recreation opportunity spectrum classification of Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized.



Existing Recreation Opportunity Spectrum



Proposed Recreation Opportunity Spectrum



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Desired Conditions for Other Plan Topics

Plan Topics	Desired Conditions
<h3>Mineral Resources</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration for and development of mineral resources does not occur within the Apache Leap SMA. Evidence of historic mining may exist but it does not dominate the scenic landscape. Lands where past mineral development or exploration has occurred are returned to stable conditions and vegetated with native species. • Abandoned mine lands do not endanger people or the environment. • Archaeological, geological, and biological features of caves and abandoned mines are not adversely affected by visitors.
<h3>Wildlife</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Apache Leap SMA provides food, water, and shelter over a relatively undisturbed landscape to help meet the needs of various species. • Connectivity and current habitat characteristics maintain requirements that enable continued animal movement, provide cover (protective/breeding), and forage across the landscape. Healthy, diverse vegetation and functioning ecosystem processes occur to ensure on-going diversity of habitats and wildlife, while maintaining sustainability for both. Wildlife are largely free from harassment and disturbance that could affect their persistence.
<h3>Vegetation</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural ecological processes (e.g., plant growth and die-off, nutrient cycling, soil formation) and disturbances (e.g., fire, insects, drought and disease) are the primary forces affecting the composition, structure, and growth of vegetation. • Plant communities within the Apache Leap SMA are dominated by native species. Woody, herbaceous, and emergent native vegetation is present and consistent with potential composition, density, and structural diversity. • Undesirable nonnative species are absent or present only to the extent that they do not adversely affect ecosystem composition, structure, or function, including native species populations or the natural fire regime. Introduction of additional invasive species rarely occurs and is detected at an early stage.
<h3>Public Access</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public access within the Apache Leap SMA is consistent with protection of scenic and cultural/historic values. Roads and motorized trails are not evident within the Apache Leap SMA. The transportation system supports resource management activities and dispersed recreation opportunities.
<h3>Livestock Grazing</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestock grazing does not occur on the Superior Allotment within the Apache Leap SMA boundary. Grazing on the Devil's Canyon Allotment within the Apache Leap SMA boundary occurs but is minimal. Existing impacts to native vegetation communities or soil disturbance associated with past livestock grazing recovers over time sustaining the natural character of the landscape.
<h3>Wildland Fire</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human life, property, and natural and cultural resources are protected within and adjacent to the Apache Leap SMA. Wildland fires when they occur burn within the range of frequency and intensity of the natural fire regimes. Uncharacteristic high severity fires rarely occur and do not burn at the landscape scale. Wildland fire sustains resources and functions in its natural ecological role.



United States Department of Agriculture
Tonto National Forest

Apache Leap Special Management Area

Public Comment

Please provide scoping comments on the proposed Management Plan!

The Forest Service is preparing an **Environmental Assessment (EA)** and soliciting public scoping comments on the proposed management plan.

The 45-day public comment period is open from March 17 through April 30, 2017. Your comments will be most useful if received by the closing date of the scoping comment period.

Under 36 CFR 219, the Forest Service planning objection process, only individuals or entities that submit written formal comments on the proposed management plan will be able to participate in the future objection process.

- Fill out the **comment form** provided and drop in box or mail in at a later date
- Provide a **verbal comment tonight** with the court reporter
- Send email to: **comments@ApacheLeapSMA.us**
- Send mail to : Apache Leap SMA Comments
P.O. Box 34468, Phoenix, AZ
85067-4468

For Further Information:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/tonto/>
<http://www.ApacheLeapSMA.us/>



Ground Rules

- The goal of tonight's meeting is to provide information and receive comments about the proposed Apache Leap SMA Management Plan.
- We are **not** here to discuss the Resolution Copper Mine proposal or the land exchange. There are other opportunities to comment on these aspects of the NDAA.
- We wish to foster an environment of mutual respect among all present tonight. Please listen patiently as others express themselves and contribute in ways you believe will be most helpful.
- Questions are welcome after the presentation - please hold your questions until that time.