FOREST SERVICE LANDS MANAGEMENT IN THE BELLEMTON AREA

Presentation to the Bellmont Area Plan Committee
Bridget Roth – Public Services Staff Officer, Coconino National Forest
FS LANDS HISTORY IN THE BELLEMONT AREA

- Non-federal lands were result of Homesteads, State Land Grants/State land exchanges, small land exchanges
- Navajo Army Depot created through special military designation and legislation
- Federal land was proclaimed in 1904, 1906 and 1910
- United States acquired some lands in the Bellemont area through lands exchanges prior to 1970
- Arizona Game and Fish Department shooting range land exchange
  - NEPA decision in 2003
  - Cancelled 2004
- Current private / Forest boundaries remain the same as in 2003
LAND ADJUSTMENT, EASEMENTS AND SPECIAL USE PERMIT DIRECTION
Desired Conditions are
- Aspirational
- Non-prescriptive

The Coconino NF has a mostly contiguous land base that provides for biologically diverse public lands with minimal impacts from adjacent land uses. Most of the forest has a natural-appearing landscape that has not lost its wildland character. Open space values are retained, including those related to naturally appearing landscapes, wildlife habitat, riparian/wetland character, and recreational opportunities.

Easement rights-of-way across lands of other ownership provide access to the forest.
SHOULD HAVE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING QUALITIES:

- Contains habitat for threatened or endangered species and sensitive species.
- Contributes to the continuity of wildlife and plant habitat.
- Contains or influences wetlands, riparian areas, or other water-related features.
- Provides needed access, protects public lands from fire or encroachment, or prevents damage to resources.
- Contributes to areas of high or very high scenic integrity.
- Improves the ability to manage a designated special area.
- Contains significant sites with cultural, scientific, or recreational values.
SHOULD HAVE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING QUALITIES:

- Isolated from other National Forest System lands.
- Does not contain unique cultural, scientific, or ecological resources.
- Managed for a single commercial or other special use, for which it is being exchanged or sold.
- Has lost its wildland characteristics.
- Meets the needs for communities and the public such as for a water treatment plant.
- Resolve innocent encroachments as opportunities arise.
- Improve National Forest System management such as administrative sites, recreation residence tracts, and organizational camps.
- Adjacent to existing lands of other ownership.
- When responding to requests for new access permits or easements, easements should be granted in reciprocity to ensure administrative and public access to the forest unless they are inappropriate because of the physical situation of the site or because they would conflict with the desired conditions of the area to retain the forest's setting and contribution.
Desired Conditions for Pine Belt Management Area

• Functioning wetlands provide nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds; foraging habitat for peregrine falcons and other raptors; and water for a variety of species.

• Wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities are emphasized in this area.

• For scenery desired conditions, see the forestwide section on Scenic Resources and map 13 for SIOs.
MANAGEMENT APPROACHES FOR LAND ADJUSTMENTS

- CONSULT with local governments about land adjustment proposals
- PUBLIC INPUT on land adjustment
- If acquisition cannot occur, COLLABORATE with private landowners and county governments to protect unique resources and the resources and character of the national forest
- COOPERATE with local governments to identify and maintain appropriate trail access on private lands through the private land development process.
- WORK WITH LANDOWNERS AND LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS to encourage policies and development practices
- PROVIDE INPUT to the design requirement of new developments (especially when they are adjacent to the forest) and participate in community growth planning efforts.
MANAGEMENT APPROACHES FOR LAND ADJUSTMENTS

- Participate as a GOVERNMENT LIAISON concerning open space issues.
- Continue linking city and county trails to National Forest System trails.
- SHARE PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION TOOLS and information about future plans.
- Support OPEN SPACE DESIGNATIONS adjacent to the forest
- Work with local and regional governments and road agencies to DEVELOP TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS that reduce traffic and vehicle impacts on National Forest System lands.
- WORK WITH HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATIONS AND HOMEOWNERS to plan and implement measures that reduce wildfire threats to life and property
GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL USES

- Access roads to a parcel of private property should be managed to reduce and control proliferation of roads on the forest while meeting legal obligations to owners of inholdings.
FS LANDS PROGRAM - DETAILS

- Land Exchanges
  - Considered
    - around private property
    - In exchange for property ANYWHERE in Arizona
    - For public uses by a government (Townsite Act)
  - Isolated or heavily impacted parcels more likely to be considered

- Retain NF Character
  - Suggestions for planning
    - Leave open space buffer on private land to prevent encroachment
    - Limit need infrastructure on the Forest
      - Plan on non-federal lands
    - Know your boundaries!
  - Suggestions for action
    - Fence in property using surveyed boundaries
    - Minimize degradation of public lands by OHV and other unauthorized uses

Suggestions for planning:

- Leave open space buffer on private land to prevent encroachment
- Limit need infrastructure on the Forest
  - Plan on non-federal lands
- Know your boundaries!

Suggestions for action:

- Fence in property using surveyed boundaries
- Minimize degradation of public lands by OHV and other unauthorized uses