

# NEWS RELEASE

## Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests Tonto National Forest



For Immediate Release

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### **Funding Available to Improve Forest Health or Infrastructure Maintenance** ***Deadline to submit project applications is August 27, 2012***

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**Springerville & Phoenix AZ; July 26, 2012**—Applications are now being accepted by the Eastern Arizona Counties Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) for projects that can be funded under the Title II authority of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, as re-authorized in 2008 and recently extended through 2013. Successful applicants receive funding on a reimbursement basis.

Although the primary location for Title II projects is on Federal lands administered by the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (all Ranger Districts) and the Tonto National Forest (Globe, Pleasant Valley, Tonto Basin, and Payson Ranger Districts), the projects can be on non-Federal lands within Apache, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, and Navajo counties where projects would benefit resources and those who use them on these National Forests.

The Act authorizes the US Forest Service to enter into agreements or contracts with or provide grants to other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and private and non-profit entities for projects that improve the maintenance of existing infrastructure, such as roads, trails, or recreation facilities, or projects that improve forest health and restore and improve land health and water quality.

The following types of projects are eligible:

- Road, trail, and infrastructure maintenance or obliteration
- Soil productivity improvement
- Improvements in forest ecosystem health
- Watershed and stream restoration and maintenance
- Restoration, maintenance, and improvement of wildlife habitat
- Control of noxious weeds
- Re-establishment of native species

Each project proposal will be evaluated on the basis cost-effectiveness, to what extent partners are involved, it's educational value, how the project improves the quality of human life, including any employment opportunities, and what benefits accrue to ecosystem health. Projects will generally be less than \$75,000, although particularly meritorious proposals may be considered at higher funding levels.

Funding will become available in early 2013. Total funding available by county will not be determined until counties make their Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act choices in September 2012.

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Potential applicants for Title II funding should discuss their proposal with the affected District Ranger before submitting an application, because the proposal must have District Ranger support before it can be considered for funding. The Act allows Title II funds to be used for some of the costs of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and/or for on-the-ground project implementation. All project proposals for on-the-ground project work need to be covered by any required NEPA and associated analyses at the time of the proposal.

Project proposals will be reviewed at a September 2012 RAC meeting (exact date and location to be determined). Projects recommended and approved by the appropriate Forest Supervisor will be funded in early 2013, after completion of any needed agreements or other obligating instruments. (Successful applicants must ensure that the required legal paperwork is completed and signed before they begin their project.) Deadline for submission of project applications is August 27, 2012.

For grant applications on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests please contact Joe Vieth via email at [jvieth@fs.fed.us](mailto:jvieth@fs.fed.us) or by phone at (928) 333-6261.

For grant applications on the Tonto National Forest please contact Sherry Smith via email at [sherrysmith@fs.fed.us](mailto:sherrysmith@fs.fed.us) or by phone at (602) 225-5383.

For more information on Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act please visit: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/pts>.

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