

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service Prescott National Forest



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Progress Made with Northern Arizona Land Exchange

PRESCOTT, Ariz(February 26, 2007) - The Forest Service announced today that significant progress has occurred toward completion of the Yavapai Ranch Land Exchange as directed by the Northern Arizona Land Exchange Act signed into law in November 2005.

A document called the Agreement to Initiate (ATI), required for all federal exchanges, was recently signed by all parties to the exchange. The purpose of the ATI is to identify and describe each parcel potentially involved in the exchange as well as all reservations, easements, and third party rights. "All provisions in the ATI are consistent with the provisions of the federal legislation, and only lands identified in the legislation are included," said Prescott National Forest Supervisor Alan Quan.

"The ATI is a preliminary but important step in the land exchange process," Quan said. "It is a road map for the actual exchange. The name is a little misleading. We have been working diligently on the exchange mandated by Public Law 109-110 and have completed much of the field work for the various assessments that are required."

Quan noted that the legislated exchange, which primarily seeks to consolidate the acreage into separate private and public contiguous areas on Yavapai Ranch northwest of Prescott, was the subject of significant public comment as its authorizing legislation was being debated in Congress.

Federal lands to be traded on the Prescott National Forest include the checkerboard lands and parcels in Camp Verde and south of Prescott. Also included are federal lands in the cities of Williams and Flagstaff on the Kaibab and Coconino National Forests. Most of the federal lands off of the checkerboard will be conveyed to the cities and existing youth camps occupying the lands. The exchange provides opportunities for the affected communities to improve and expand municipal services for airports, water and sewer treatment plants, and recreation.

The ATI was signed by the Forest Service, Yavapai Ranch Limited Partnership, SunCor, and First American Title Insurance Company as participants in the exchange.

(Note to Editor: Further information may be obtained from Lands Team Leader, Ken Simeral, at 928-443-8010).

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