

**Tonto National Forest's Nomination of *Chi'chil Bildagoteel*,
commonly known as Oak Flat and Apache Leap,
to the National Register of Historic Places
as an Apache Traditional Cultural Property**

The Tonto National Forest has been working in partnership with the San Carlos Apache Tribe to officially nominate *Chi'chil Bildagoteel*, commonly known as Oak Flat and Apache Leap, to the National Register of Historic Places as an Apache Traditional Cultural Property. This process has consisted of oral history collection, archival research, and government-to-government consultation.

TNF has already submitted a draft to the State Historic Preservation Officer and incorporated feedback. We have also submitted a draft to County Supervisor Pete Rios as the chief elected local official of the county (where the property is located), and received comments. On October 24, 2014 TNF send the Regional Heritage Program Manager (Region 3) the DRAFT. At this time he may provide comments or forward the DRAFT directly to the Keeper of the National Register.

- Federal agencies are required by law to locate, inventory, and nominate to the National Register historic properties in Federal ownership or control (policies that apply; 36 CFR 60 and NPS guidelines, FSH 2309.12 – Heritage Program Management Chapter 40 – Protection and Stewardship).
- Agencies proposing projects that may affect a property listed in or eligible for the National Register must allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (an independent Federal agency that provides a forum for influencing Federal activities, programs, and policies as they affect historic resources) an opportunity to comment prior to funding, licensing or granting assistance on such projects.
- The law does not mandate preservation by the Federal agency and its purpose is not to impede or halt development. Rather this process assures that the value of historic properties is given direct consideration in project planning decisions.
- For purposes of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), a Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP), “is eligible for inclusion in the NRHP because of its association with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that (a) are rooted in that community’s history, and (b) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.
- In January 2012, the Tonto National Forest Tribal Relations/Heritage Team initiated the process of formally nominating *Chi'chil bidagoteel* (Oakflat Campground) to the National Register as a Traditional Cultural Property. This project was initiated to provide TNF a tool for preservation planning in land use plans related to Oakflat campground, Apache Leap, Queen Creek Canyon, and the surrounding area. Identification and evaluation of this well-known TCP would help inform decision making regarding this significant properties.

- Tribal elders and consultants were able to visit this area on the Forest and share the importance with Forest Staff. Initiating tribal consultation early and effectively provided plenty of time to gain tribal interest and cooperation. This was key in allowing the tribes a comfortable amount of time to engage in field visits.
- The result of government-to-government consultations with various Arizona Indian Tribes, oral history collection, archival research, and improvements of several rough drafts resulted in a working DRAFT to be improved with recommendations from Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (AZSHPO).

TIMELINE

- January 31, 2012 - TNF begins consultation with AZ Indian Tribes regarding the nomination
- February 2012 – July 2014: Writing, field visits, tribal meetings, draft improvements.
- July 2014 – TNF sent DRAFT nomination to AZSHPO
- August 1, 2014 – TNF receives comments from AZSHPO
- Sept 22, 2014 – TNF sent DRAFT to Pete Rios, Pinal County Supervisor
- Oct 30, 2014 – TNF receives comments from Pete Rios
- Oct 27, 2014 – TNF sends DRAFT to FS Region 3 Heritage Program Manager
- Next step – FS Region 3 Heritage Program Manager sends DRAFT nomination to the Keeper of the National Register in Washington D.C.