



Oak Flat Withdrawal Area Facts

Initial withdrawal: The 760-acre “Oak Flat Picnic and Camp Ground” area was withdrawn on September 30, 1955 (Federal Register October 1, 1955) by a Public Land Order (PLO 1229) signed by Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Fred Aandahl. The withdrawal text read:

“RESERVING LANDS WITHIN NATIONAL FORESTS FOR USE OF THE FOREST SERVICE AS CAMPGROUNDS, RECREATION AREAS AND FOR OTHER PUBLIC PURPOSES”. The lands were “*withdrawn...from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including the mining but not the mineral leasing laws, and reserved for use of the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, as camp grounds, recreation areas, and for other public purposes, as indicated*”.

Part of routine withdrawal package: The Oak Flat withdrawal was part of a package of 24 campground, fire lookout, picnic and recreation area withdrawals in the Tonto and Coconino National Forests in Arizona. It was accompanied by 19 similar withdrawals for campgrounds, lookout sites, and other purposes in the Apache National Forest in New Mexico.

Reason for withdrawal: In response to a question about the Oak Flat withdrawal asked by Congressman Grijalva at the November 1, 2007 hearing on H.R. 3301 (a predecessor bill to the current H.R. 687 and S.B. 339, Deputy Forest Service Chief, Joel Holtrop, indicated:

Mr. HOLTROP: “The mineral withdrawal at that time was done to protect the Federal Government’s interest in the capital improvement of the campground that exists there.”

Withdrawal reason reiterated: At the November 1, 2007 hearing, Congressman Rob Bishop also asked about the Oak Flat withdrawal. Mr. Holtrop gave the same answer. Namely, that where the Forest Service makes improvements in facilities such as campgrounds, recreation sites, etc., “*it is not uncommon*” to protect those investments by withdrawing them from the operation of the mining laws.

1971 withdrawal modification: On September 20, 1971, the “Oak Flat Picnic and Campground” withdrawal was modified by Public Land Order 5132 signed by Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Harrison Loesch. The new order stated that the 1955 Public Land Order 1229 was:

“*hereby modified to the extent necessary to **open** the following described lands to all forms of appropriation under the public land laws applicable to national forest lands, except under the U.S. mining laws....the lands described in paragraph 1 will be **open** to such forms of disposal as may by law be made of national forest lands except appropriation under the U.S. mining laws.*”

Current status of Oak Flat withdrawal: Since 1971, the 760-acre “Oak Flat Picnic and Camp Ground” area has been eligible for disposal by land exchange and other disposal authorities of the Forest Service.