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# News Release

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## **Kaibab National Forest seeks public input on proposed wetland habitat improvement project on Williams Ranger District**

**Williams, Ariz., March 6, 2017—For Immediate Release.** Kaibab National Forest managers are seeking public input on a proposed project to improve wetland habitat at six wetlands across the Williams Ranger District in order to enhance wildlife habitat and promote conditions for native, aquatic vegetation.

Specifically, the proposed project would improve the structure and function of the wetland habitat by constructing pools of varying depths within the fenced enclosures of these wetlands. Under the proposal, these improvements would be implemented at Coleman Lake, Horse Lake, Mineral Lake, Holden Lake, Dry Lake and Moritz Lake. Detailed improvement actions are included in the Wetland Habitat Improvement Project Proposed Action, which is available for review on the Kaibab National Forest website at [www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50282](http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50282).

As a result of historical livestock grazing, the associated construction of earthen tanks, and climate change, these wetlands have experienced a substantial decrease in the days per calendar year that they hold water. This is referred to as the hydroperiod, which is critical to maintaining habitat quality for wetland-dependent species. This reduction in the hydroperiod has reduced habitat quality and connectivity, and impacted nutrient cycling and water availability. The proposed improvements are intended to increase the hydroperiod, thereby improving wetland habitat across the Williams district.

Wetlands are considered the most biologically diverse of all ecosystems, serving as home to a wide range of plants and animals. In the arid Southwest, wetlands encompass less than one percent of the landscape but are critically important for migrating birds, waterfowl, shorebirds, amphibians, bats, and aquatic plants and insects.

“The Williams Ranger District has a history of working to improve and protect its wetlands, and this proposed project would continue those important efforts,” said Williams and Tusayan Districts Ranger Danelle D. Harrison.

Members of the public are invited to comment on the proposed Wetland Habitat Improvement Project beginning today and ending April 6. To submit e-comments, please email [comments-southwestern-kaibab-williams@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southwestern-kaibab-williams@fs.fed.us). For hard copy mailed or hand delivered comments, please deliver them to the Williams Ranger District office at 742 S. Clover Road, Williams, AZ 86046 during office hours Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information on the project, please contact Travis Largent, wildlife biologist, at (928) 635-5631. ###

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