



Forest Service
Coconino National Forest
1824 S. Thompson Street
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

News Release



Public Information: (928) 527-3600
www.CoconinoNationalForest.us

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Storms bypass Platypus Fire, activity increases

SEDONA, Ariz., Aug. 17, 2018, For Immediate Release – Fire managers on the Coconino National Forest observed new activity in the Platypus Fire Friday after thunderstorms earlier in the week bypassed Secret Mountain.

The monsoon has been active in northern Arizona, but the spotty rains missed the Platypus Fire and soaked the Rhino Fire as the cells moved through the area.

Few ground suppression efforts can be successful in this area and aerial firefighting resources are being prioritized and assigned to fires throughout the nation with an immediate need to protect life and property. This fire is burning in extremely hazardous and rugged terrain in the Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness north of Sedona. The other two fires in the area, the Rhino and Surveyor Fires, have little or no smoke showing Friday.

Burn out operations may be required Saturday around a historic uninhabitable cabin to remove the fuels around it and stopping the fire from leaving the wilderness. If this operation happens, increased smoke will be seen in the area.

Thunderstorms building in the area of the fires may result in erratic smoke patterns. More monsoon weather and precipitation may further suppress these wildfires.

1. PLATYPUS FIRE OVERVIEW (<https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/6061/>)

Discovery date: July 28, 2018.

Cause: Lightning.

Location: Approximately 6 miles northwest of Sedona in Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness more than 4 miles from the nearest trailhead. (Lat/Long: [34.94291, -111.8701](#))

Current size: The Platypus Fire is approximately 750 acres and is actively burning the remains of the 1994 Lost Fire.

Resources: Patrols and local lookouts are monitoring the fire. No direct suppression actions have been taken on the Platypus Fire due to extremely hazardous and rugged terrain in the Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness.



Flagstaff Ranger Station: (928) 526-0866
Mogollon Rim Ranger Station: (928) 477-2255
Red Rock Ranger Station: (928) 282-4119



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Predicted smoke impacts: The fire is producing smoke from heavy fuels and is moving up, east and throughout canyons in the area. Burnout operations may happen Saturday increasing the smoke being seen in the area. Smoke may be visible from Oak Creek Canyon, Sedona and the Verde Valley. Smoke dispersing to the east may settle in Flagstaff and surrounding low-level areas as the temperatures cool down. Also, the Enchantment Resort, Boyton Canyon, Seven Canyons can expect localized smoke, which is thicker in the early morning hours.

Current closures: Secret Mountain Trail No. 109 (<http://bit.ly/SecretMtnTrail>).

Recent and current operations: Burn out operations may be required Saturday around a historic uninhabitable cabin removing the fuels around it and maintaining the fire's edge within the wilderness. Because this fire is in an extremely rugged section of the Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness at the edge of sheer cliffs, fire managers have only been monitoring it. Any firefighter assigned to work in the area would be placed at significant risk, particularly if an injury required rapid transportation for medical care.

2. RHINO FIRE OVERVIEW (<https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/6061/>)

Discovery date: July 28, 2018.

Cause: Lightning.

Location: Approximately 8 miles northwest of Sedona in Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness. (Lat/Long: [34.970900, -111.859100](#))

Current size: The Rhino Fire is approximately 330 acres.

Resources: Occasional patrols and lookouts are monitoring this fire.

Predicted smoke impacts: Very light, if any, smoke is being produced and it is moving to the east. Smoke dispersing to the east may settle in Kachina Village and surrounding low-level areas.

Current closures: Secret Mountain Trail No. 109 (<http://bit.ly/SecretMtnTrail>).

Recent and current operations: Firefighters have been helped out by numerous thunderstorms raining on the fire. No firefighting operations are planned in the near future.

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