



U.S. Forest Service
Kaibab National Forest
800 S. 6th St.
Williams, AZ 86046
Voice: (928) 635-8200
Email: mailroom_r3_kaibab@fs.fed.us
Web: www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab

News Release

Media Contact: Jackie Banks
(928) 635-8314
jcbanks@fs.fed.us



Kaibab National Forest seeks input on proposed wildlife viewing area

Williams, Ariz., July 11, 2017—For Immediate Release. The Kaibab National Forest is seeking public input on a proposed project to construct a pond for the northern leopard frog as well as a larger wildlife viewing area on the grounds of the Williams Ranger District compound. The goals of the project are to increase the viable habitat for the frog and to provide the community with the opportunity to learn about conservation issues.

The project would include the pond that would serve as a habitat and source population for the northern leopard frogs, a pollinator garden to attract pollinator species, interpretive signs, and an Americans with Disabilities Act-approved trail, all of which are intended to enhance public education and recreation experiences.

The Kaibab National Forest is within the natural historic range of the northern leopard frog, which spans the northern and central portions of Arizona. Leading biologists have noted the species is undergoing significant declines in the southwestern United States. Factors like the presence of invasive species and infection by fungal diseases have contributed to the loss of northern leopard frog populations in Arizona, but no stressing factor is more prevalent than the loss of suitable wetland habitat.

The northern leopard frog, which was considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act in 2011, was identified and listed as a Forest Service Sensitive Species by the Regional Forester in 2013. This means that it is a species for which population viability is a concern. The Arizona Game and Fish Department has also prioritized the northern leopard frog as a Tier 1A species, which categorizes it into the highest priority for conservation management and considers it to be a species of greatest conservation need.

The Kaibab National Forest has a history of working with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve existing and attempt to establish new populations of northern leopard frogs on both the Williams and North Kaibab districts of the forest.

The Clover Pond Wildlife Habitat Project Proposed Action is available on the Kaibab National Forest website at www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=51795. Members of the public are invited to provide their comments through Aug. 21. To submit e-comments, please email 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) 635-5600.

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Northern leopard frogs with egg masses. Credit Kaibab National Forest.