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Tusayan District to Implement 8,000-Acre Thinning and Burning Project

TUSAYAN, Ariz. – Tusayan District Ranger Nick Larson recently signed a decision to implement a thinning and prescribed burning project on 8,000 acres of the Tusayan Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest.

The Russell Vegetation Management Project was proposed to address forest health, wildlife habitat and wildfire concerns associated with overly dense ponderosa pine and pinyon-juniper stands within the project area.

To meet those objectives, the Russell Vegetation Management Project Environmental Assessment identified the need to:

- Reduce stand densities in ponderosa pine and pinyon-juniper stands to promote forest health, improve wildlife habitat, and reduce the risk of severe wildfire;
- Apply prescribed fire treatments to reduce existing fuel loading, treat thinning slash, and maintain fire's natural role in the ecosystem; and,
- Meet demand for fuelwood by making thinning products available to the surrounding communities through fuelwood permits.

The decision, which was signed Aug. 19, will result in noncommercial thinning on 5,000 acres, prescribed burning across 8,000 acres including maintenance burning every six to 10 years, and personal and commercial fuelwood removal throughout most of the 8,000-acre project area.

The project area is located about 15 miles southeast of the town of Tusayan. Boundaries are the Coconino Rim Road, also known as Forest Road 310, on the north, FR 310RC on the east, FR 320 on the south, FR 301 on the southwest, and FR 317 on the northwest side.

For additional information on the Russell Vegetation Management Project, please visit www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=18997.

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