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News Release

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Kaibab National Forest partners with The Nature Conservancy on forest restoration project and continues other critical work near Williams

Williams, Ariz., Nov. 30, 2017 — For Immediate Release. The Kaibab National Forest is partnering with The Nature Conservancy to complete critical forest restoration and watershed protection work around Bill Williams Mountain near the City of Williams.

The tree thinning work within the 2,496-acre Clover project area began this week and is expected to continue over the next two years, depending on weather and ground conditions at any given time. The work is occurring within the larger 15,200-acre Bill Williams Mountain Restoration Project footprint and is a top treatment priority for forest managers due to the area being the primary watershed and municipal water supply for the City of Williams.

“Getting this work accomplished is incredibly important to us as forest managers and as members of the Williams community,” said Samantha Flores, timber staff officer for the South Zone of the Kaibab National Forest. “By partnering with The Nature Conservancy through a stewardship agreement, we are able to meet our shared goals of greatly improving forest and watershed health while also making the City of Williams safer in the long run from threats like wildfire and flooding.”

As thinning work is implemented, residents and visitors can expect to see heavy, mechanized equipment and workers in the project area as well as an increasing number of log trucks, including some that may need to travel through the City of Williams. Haul routes will include forest roads 111, 106 and 140 as well as County Road 73 and Interstate 40. It is possible that there could be a significant number of trucks hauling timber through the area until project completion.

Members of the public are urged to use extreme caution near timber removal and hauling operations. Besides the presence of heavy equipment and log trucks, there will also be trees being felled and stacked into log decks, which can be unstable. Visitors to the area should not camp near nor climb on them, as they often shift and have the possibility of collapse.

While there are no official closures in place associated with this forest restoration work, visitors interested in hiking Bill Williams Mountain are encouraged to use the [Bill Williams Mountain Trail](#) rather than the [Benham Trail](#) for the duration of the project due to the likelihood that temporary detours or re-routes of Benham Trail might be necessary at various points, depending on harvesting activity.

Besides the Clover project, other forest restoration efforts are also underway in the Bill Williams Mountain Restoration Project footprint. Kaibab National Forest employees have planned and laid out more than 3,500 acres to be included in timber sales. This has involved developing prescriptions for these acres and marking trees within them. Members of the public may notice the marked trees while visiting the area. The Forest Service will be seeking to offer these acres in timber sales in the near future to local contractors and others who may be able to support the forest restoration effort.

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Also, 700 acres are being treated using hand thinning operations on the steep slopes of the south side of Bill Williams Mountain. Because of the inability of most heavy equipment to reach these challenging areas, crews are carrying in chainsaws to accomplish the work.

Finally, more than 200 acres are being treated using mechanical thinning, meaning heavy equipment, along Forest Road 122, also known as the Twin Springs Road, south of Bill Williams Mountain. This treatment is intended to serve as a buffer for any wildfires that might get started south of the mountain. This is a particularly important place to treat given prevailing winds in northern Arizona and the typical direction of wildfire spread due to those winds. This is also a critical treatment due to the high recreational use in this area and the resulting potential for unwanted, human-caused wildfires that could pose threats to the mountain and to the Williams community.

“For many years, even decades, on the Kaibab National Forest, we have been working toward this goal of treating Bill Williams Mountain in a truly significant way that will help not only in terms of forest health but also community protection and public safety,” said Mike Uebel, fuels program manager for the Williams Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest and the implementation team leader for the Bill Williams Mountain Restoration Project. “To see all of the time, energy and preparation we’ve put into this effort turning into actual work on the ground is very rewarding and something we hope the Williams community will be pleased to see in action.”

Additional information on the Kaibab National Forest is available through the following resources:

- Sign up to receive news releases from Kaibab NF: www.fs.fed.us/news/subscription.shtml (Choose “Southwestern Region.”)
- Kaibab NF’s website: www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab (Look under “Recent News.”)
- Kaibab NF’s Twitter account: [www.twitter.com/KaibabNF](https://twitter.com/KaibabNF) (Text ‘follow kaibabnf’ to 40404 to receive text messages.)
- Kaibab NF’s Facebook page: www.facebook.com/KaibabNF

A map of the Clover project and photos of work occurring in the Bill Williams Mountain area are provided below. For additional photos, visit <https://www.flickr.com/photos/kaibabnationalforest/albums/72157686965373030>.

For additional information on The Nature Conservancy, visit www.nature.org.

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Downed trees resulting from hand thinning operations on steep slopes of south side of Bill Williams Mountain. Photo by Dyan Bone. Credit Kaibab National Forest.

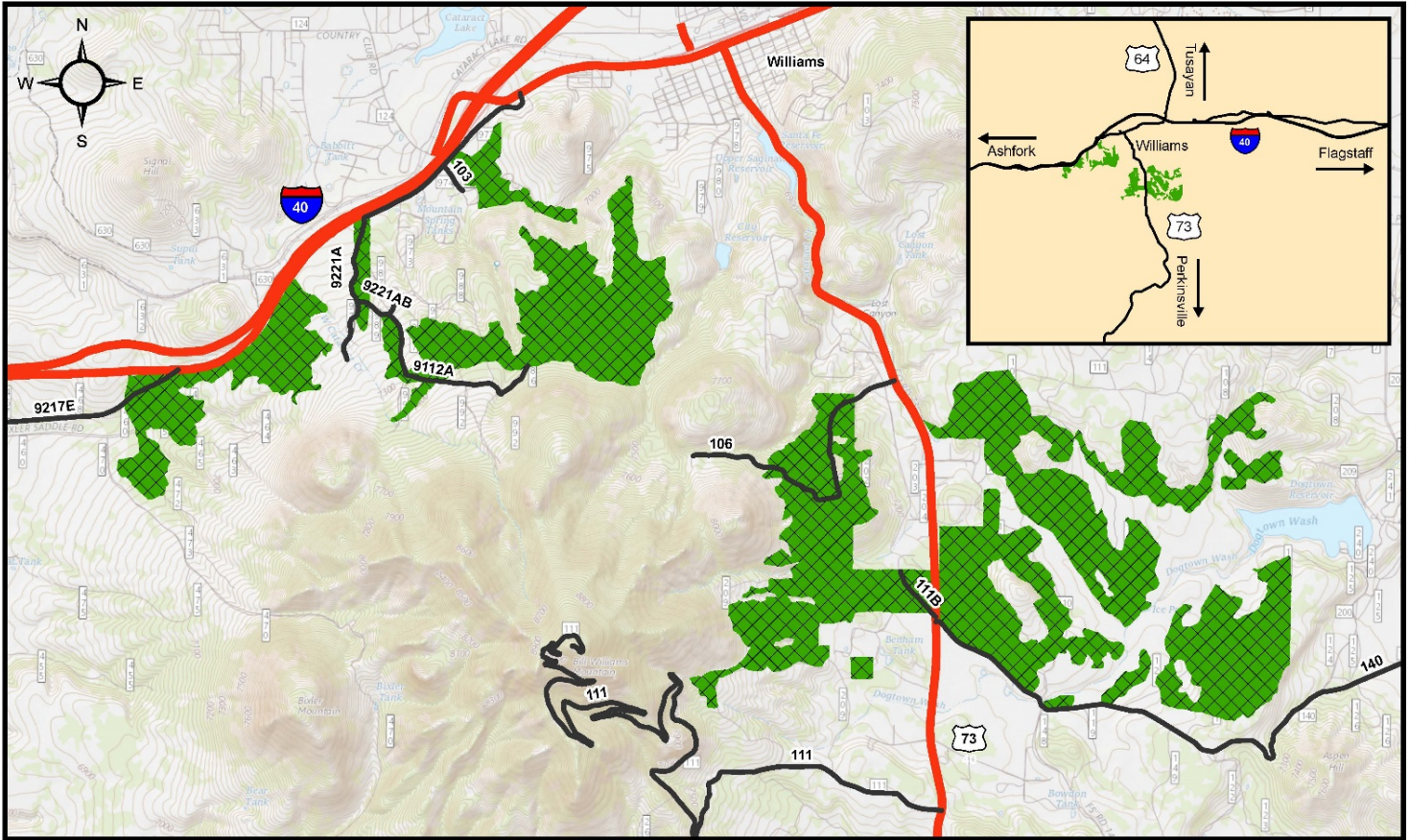


Heavy equipment being used during mechanical thinning operations along Forest Road 122. Photo by Dyan Bone. Credit Kaibab National Forest.



Kaibab National Forest employees Mike Uebel and Josh Giles stand in front of downed trees that were removed as part of forest restoration efforts near Bill Williams Mountain. Photo by Dyan Bone. Credit Kaibab National Forest.

Clover SPA



Overview map of Clover project area in which forest restoration work will be occurring over the next two years. Credit Kaibab National Forest.