



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

News Release



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

MEDIA CONTACTS
Brady Smith – Public Affairs Officer
George Jozens – Dep. Public Affairs Officer
Media Only: (928) 224-8306

Rain helps suppression

SEDONA, Ariz., Aug. 9, 2018, For Immediate Release – Fire managers with the Coconino National Forest are using all of the ground suppression efforts possible on the Platypus, Rhino and Surveyor Fires north of Sedona.

With the country at its highest point of National Fire Preparedness Levels, PL-5, firefighting resources are very busy and aerial firefighting equipment has little or no availability. The three fires burning north of Sedona are in extremely hazardous and rugged terrain in the Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness. Specific edges of a fire outside of the wilderness may receive direct suppression to protect certain values placed at risk to protect public safety, private property, cultural sites, major transmission power lines, trailheads, dispersed camping sites, and others. Actions are also taken to minimize smoke impacts where possible and necessary. Rain on Wednesday suppressed some fire, slowed its activity and wet fuels.

Sedona is receiving smoke usually overnight and then it lifts as the day warms up. Thursday smoke is not lifting very high and the light smoke from the three fires is spreading east.

Thunderstorms building in the area of the fires may randomly change wind directions making smoke patterns very difficult to predict. Additionally, monsoon weather and precipitation may assist in further suppression of 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 700 acres. Fire modeling indicates the fires are unlikely to grow outside of the wilderness or pose a significant risk to communities or natural resources.

Resources: Lookouts and aircraft periodically monitor the fire. No actions are currently being 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 not producing much smoke after rain moved through it Wednesday afternoon, the smoke is moving east. The smoke is 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: These fires are not very active Thursday because of Wednesday's passing thunderstorms. These fires are in extremely rugged areas of the Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness at the edge of sheer cliffs so fire managers have only been able to monitor them. Any firefighter working in the area would be placed at significant risk, particularly if an injury required rapid transportation for medical care. Firefighting aircraft are not available for suppression efforts because of the numerous fires throughout the nation.

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: One engine, along with lookouts totaling 6 firefighters are assigned.

Predicted smoke impacts: Smoke is not producing much lift and moving to the east. The smoke is visible from Oak Creek Canyon, Sedona and the Verde Valley. Smoke dispersing to the east may settle in Kachina Village, Flagstaff and surrounding low-level areas. Also, the Enchantment Resort, Boyton Canyon, Seven Canyons and the greater Sedona area 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: Firefighters were helped out yesterday with about ¼ inch of rain on the fire. They also have reinforced rim roads and added fire lines in front of the Rhino Fire to



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ensure it will not leave the wilderness. Preparation is taking place to ensure the historical Secret Cabin (an uninhabitable structure) in the area is protected from the Rhino Fire should it progress to it. Because these fires are in extremely rugged areas of the Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness at the edge of sheer cliffs fire managers have only been able to monitor them. Any firefighter working in the area would be placed at significant risk, particularly if an injury required rapid transportation for medical care. Firefighting aircraft are not available for suppression efforts because of higher priority fires throughout the nation.

3. SURVEYOR FIRE OVERVIEW (<https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/6070/>)

Discovery date: July 28, 2018

Cause: Lightning.

Location: Approximately 3.5 miles south of Oak Creek Canyon Vista, south of Flagstaff east of state Route 89A. (Lat/Long: [34.979611, -111.740389](#))

Current size: 10 acres.

Current resources: One engine totaling 5 firefighters is assigned.

Predicted smoke impacts: Very light smoke is moving east without much lift and is staying in the general area. Expect smoke to be near Oak Creek Canyon. Smoke also may settle in Oak Creek Canyon and Sedona, especially overnight.

Current closures: None.

Recent and current operations: Suppression efforts have this fire contained. The fire received rain Wednesday afternoon and is burning in its containment area. Firefighters will continue to monitor it closely until it receives significant moisture.

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