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For Immediate Release

April 9, 2014

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Sedona Business Paid Fine and Restitution for Illegal Activities on National Forest

Sedona, AZ - On October 25th, 2013, the Red Rock Ranger District was informed by representatives of the canyoneering community of an incident in a remote side canyon to Oak Creek. Investigators determined that a commercial business, Ropes That Rescue, conducted a week-long commercial outdoor training class September 21 – 27, 2013, which caused damage to the area.

An investigation determined that damage resulted from fires that were deliberately set as part of the training within the narrow canyon located in a part of the Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness that is also within the Oak Creek Research Natural Area. The canyon is home to rare plant and wildlife species and a sensitive riparian community.

Investigators determined that Ropes That Rescue had conducted a week-long commercial training on the Forest, sponsored by owner Reed Thorne who was present at the training. Ropes That Rescue does not possess a permit to conduct business activities on the Red Rock Ranger District and was charged with operating a commercial business without a permit and causing associated resource damage. Through an agreement reached between the United States Attorney's Office, the United States Forest Service, and the defendant and with approval of the US magistrate judge, Reed Thorne agreed to a fine of \$500 and \$5000 in restitution for damages to the area.

Questions can be directed to Jennifer Burns, Recreation Staff Officer for the Red Rock Ranger District, (928) 203-7529.

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