



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

# News Release



Public Information: (928) 527-3600  
[www.CoconinoNationalForest.us](http://www.CoconinoNationalForest.us)

**MEDIA CONTACTS**  
Brady Smith – Public Affairs Officer  
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Media Only: (928) 224-8306

## Three lightning fires being suppressed

**SEDONA, Ariz., Aug. 8, 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 Level, PL-5, firefighting resources are very busy and aerial firefighting equipment has little to 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.

Sedona is receiving smoke usually overnight and then it lifts as the day warms up. On Wednesday the lift is not very high and smoke from the three fires is mostly spreading east in local canyons.

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 suppressing these wildfires.

### 1. PLATYPUS FIRE OVERVIEW (<https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/6061/>)

**Discovery date:** July 28, 2018.

**Cause:** Lightning.

**Location:** Approximately 4 miles northwest of Sedona in Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness more than 6 miles from the nearest trailhead. (Lat/Long: [34.94291, -111.8701](#))

**Current size:** The Platypus Fire is approximately 620 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 as needed. 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:** Smoke is not producing much lift and moving to the east within the local canyons. 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. 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:** These fires are active Wednesday. 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.

## 2. RHINO 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. (Lat/Long: [34.970900, -111.859100](#))

**Current size:** The Rhino Fire is approximately 320 acres.

**Resources:** Two engines, two 10-person initial attack crews and overhead personnel, along with lookouts and reconnaissance aircraft totaling 35 firefighters are being used in suppression efforts for this fire.

**Predicted smoke impacts:** Smoke is not producing much lift and moving to the east within the local canyons. 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. 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>).



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**Recent and current operations:** Firefighters are reinforcing the rim roads and adding fire lines near the Rhino Fire to ensure it will not leave the wilderness. Plans are being prepared 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 7 firefighters are assigned.

**Predicted smoke impacts:** Light smoke is moving east without much lift and is staying in the general area and canyons. 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 has dried out and is burning in its containment area. Firefighters are monitoring it closely until it receives significant moisture.

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