



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

Cragin Watershed Protection Project receives more protection

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz., Aug. 3, 2018, For Immediate Release – A final decision increasing prescribed fire and thinning in the Blue Ridge area was signed July 27 adding protection to the watersheds feeding C.C. Cragin Reservoir which are engulfed by overgrown forest.

With the Cragin Watershed Protection Project's final decision signed by the Coconino National Forest Supervisor it culminated years of work developing a plan to protect key infrastructure, wildlife habitat and this large water source for people living under the Mogollon Rim. The thinning from this decision reduces the chances of uncharacteristically severe fire and any resulting erosion and flooding from scorched earth over the majority of the project area.

This 64,000 acre project to thin trees and apply prescribed fire treatments restores forest conditions and protects the three watersheds feeding the reservoir. C.C. Cragin Reservoir contributes to the primary water supply for the Town of Payson and surrounding communities.

The activities under the decision aim to create a more diversified forest structure, reduced tree density, ground fuels and ladder fuels, which in turn reduces risk of post-fire erosion and, or flooding that could severely impact reservoir operations and the communities depending on its water. The project will reduce the chance of severe crown fire moving across the watershed. High severity crown fires create heat that scorch the soil causing precipitation to flow over the ground, rather than being absorbed by it. The Forest Service proposes to use a combination of mechanical and hand thinning and prescribed burning to reduce these risks over the next several years.

The project has been a collaborative effort involving substantial investments of time and resources with the Salt River Project, Department of Interior Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the Town of Payson. The watersheds feeding C.C. Cragin Reservoir were identified as priority watersheds in the Western Watershed Enhancement Project, a partnership between Department of Interior Bureau of Reclamation, and Department of Agriculture Forest Service that identifies municipal watersheds at risk from uncharacteristic wildfire.

Implementation of CWPP is expected to begin soon and may result in short-term restrictions in areas using heavy equipment as soon as this fall. The Mogollon Rim Ranger District will inform nearby landowners, special use permit holders and post notices in nearby recreation facilities informing users.



Flagstaff Ranger Station: (928) 526-0866
Mogollon Rim Ranger Station: (928) 477-2255
Red Rock Ranger Station: (928) 282-4119



www.facebook.com/CoconinoNF
www.twitter.com/CoconinoNF
www.tinyurl.com/CocoPhotos



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

The CWPP is located on the boundary of the Tinder Fire, which started from an illegal campfire this April, burning nearly three dozen homes and more than 50 other structures in the first two days. The area is currently closed to ensure public safety from flooding conditions.

While the proposed project is unlikely to prevent a wildfire, the project is expected to reduce the effects a high, moderate or severe wildfire would have in the project area. The project is in direct support of extensive infrastructure required to divert water from the reservoir, 11 miles of pipeline and power lines, water pumps, priming tank and the hydropower generating unit.

The CWPP is a progression from 2014 a Memorandum of Understanding signed by Coconino National Forest, the Salt River Project, Department of Interior Bureau of Reclamation, the National Forest Foundation and Town of Payson to proactively improve the health of the watershed in this multi-stakeholder landscape prioritization effort. Many other organizations and individuals have participated extensively and provided feedback during this planning process improving treatments and assessing environmental effects.

For more information and view the decision visit the project website at <http://bit.ly/CWPPdecision>

###



Flagstaff Ranger Station: (928) 526-0866
Mogollon Rim Ranger Station: (928) 477-2255
Red Rock Ranger Station: (928) 282-4119



www.facebook.com/CoconinoNF
www.twitter.com/CoconinoNF
www.tinyurl.com/CocoPhotos