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Kaibab National Forest to treat more than 17,000 acres with thinning, burning south of Williams

WILLIAMS, Ariz. – Kaibab National Forest Supervisor Mike Williams has approved a plan to treat more than 17,000 acres on the Williams Ranger District south of the city of Williams through a combination of tree thinning and prescribed burning.

The McCracken Project, which is located between three and 12 miles south of the city of Williams, will improve the health and sustainability of the forest by reducing tree densities and fuel loadings.

Specifically, the McCracken Project will include commercial and noncommercial thinning of trees on about 15,262 acres, and prescribed burning on about 17,337 acres. About 2,075 acres will be treated with prescribed burning only. These treatments will reduce dwarf mistletoe infections and the risk of stand-replacing wildland fires.

Other project objectives include reintroducing fire as a natural part of the ecosystem; reducing fuel buildup to help prevent the spread of wildland fire onto private property and into the city of Williams watershed; and, reducing stand densities in order to move toward a forest structure more typical under pre-settlement fire regimes.

Work on the McCracken Project could begin as soon as August, depending on whether or not the project is appealed. Individuals or organizations who provided comments or expressed interest in the proposed action during the comment period may appeal. Detailed project information and documents, along with the appeal process, are available on the Kaibab National Forest website at www.fs.usda.gov/goto/kaibab/projects.

“The McCracken Project will contribute to the ongoing, landscape-level treatments on Kaibab National Forest that are so important in protecting natural and cultural resources as well as private property and our local communities,” said Kaibab National Forest Supervisor Mike Williams. “It will result in a more defensible, healthy and resilient forest.”

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