



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Coconino
National Forest,
Supervisor's Office

1824 S. Thompson Street
Flagstaff, AZ 86001-2529
Phone: (928) 527-3600
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File Code: 1900/1950

Date: September 16, 2011

Dear Interested Party,

The Coconino National Forest is conducting public scoping for the proposed Wing Mountain Fuels Reduction and Forest Health Restoration project. You are being contacted about this proposal because of your past interest in forest restoration projects on the Coconino National Forest or because you own property within, or adjacent to, the project area. The Wing Mountain Fuels Reduction and Forest Health project area is approximately 11,200 acres, and is located within all or portions of T22N, R6E, Sec. 1-5, 7-21, 28-30, 33; T23N, R6E, Sec. 35, and 36 on the Flagstaff Ranger District of the Coconino National Forest. The project area is bordered by Forest Service roads, the Kachina Peaks Wilderness, Arizona Snowbowl, and the Fort Valley Experimental Forest, as well as private and state lands. Elevation ranges from around 7400 to 9200 feet (see Map 1).

Due to fire exclusion and suppression, much of the ponderosa pine forest in the project area is overcrowded, causing increased competition between trees for resources and increased wildfire risk. In addition, the grasslands/savannahs have been experiencing conifer encroachment, causing decreased productivity and diversity of understory species (grasses, forbs, and shrubs). The majority of aspen stands are in poor health with little successful regeneration. There are also segments of system roads that are currently causing soil and watershed concerns.

The entire project area and adjacent lands, including the Kachina Peaks Wilderness, are at risk for wildfire (see Map1). Approximately half of the project area exhibits extreme wildfire hazard ratings, with high to moderate ratings in the remaining areas. Reducing fuel loading and returning fire to the landscape at regular intervals is of high importance to protect the area and adjacent sensitive lands from high intensity, stand replacing wildfire.

The purpose of this project is to improve the health of forest resources, restore watershed conditions and associated habitats, and to reduce the threat of severe wildfire in and around the Wing Mountain project area. There is a need to move toward conditions that support natural and desirable fire behavior with healthy and sustainable forests, meadows, and watersheds.

In order to achieve this, restoration treatments for ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, grasslands, savannahs, and aspen stands are proposed. Also included are restoration treatments for Big Leroux and Maxwell Springs, which would consist of constructing ungulate-deterrent fences and/or re-plumbing to restore riparian vegetation and spring health. Approximately 4 miles of new temporary roads would be constructed to facilitate hauling and operations. All temporary



roads would be rehabilitated after project completion. Approximately 8 miles of existing roads are proposed for decommission to reduce mileage and protect resources. More information about proposed treatments can be found on the Coconino National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/nepa/index.shtml>, or are available upon request from the contact listed below.

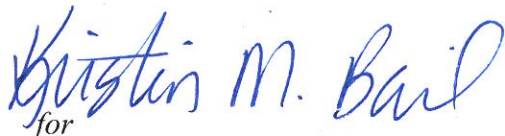
YOUR INVOLVEMENT

The purpose of this letter is to encourage your participation during our public scoping process. If you have information you feel the Forest Service may not be aware of, or have input regarding this proposed action, please send that information to Leah Schofield, Environmental Coordinator, on the Flagstaff Ranger District by regular mail to 5075 N. Highway 89, Flagstaff, AZ 86004; by fax at 928.527.8288; by phone at 928.527.8264; or by email to comments-southwestern-coconino-peaks@fs.fed.us. Comments may also be hand delivered to the Flagstaff District Office at the above address between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, except holidays. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this project and will be available for public inspection. To be the most helpful in the planning process, **please provide your comments by October 18th, 2011.**

Those who respond to this invitation for comments will be notified when the Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project is available for review, which is anticipated in spring of 2012. If you do not respond, your name will be removed from the mailing list for future correspondence concerning this project. In the event that you choose not to comment but would still like a copy of the EA, please contact Leah Schofield at 928.527.8264 or ljschofield@fs.fed.us.

We appreciate your involvement in forest management proposals. Should you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Leah Schofield, Environmental Coordinator, Flagstaff Ranger District at 928.527.8264 or by e-mail at ljschofield@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristin M. Bail".

for
M. EARL STEWART
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure

cc: Leah J Schofield, Michael Chaveas, Mike Dechter