



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Coconino
National Forest,
Supervisor's Office

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File Code: 1950-1

Date: August 19, 2008

Dear Citizen:

The Coconino National Forest is pleased to announce the issuance of the Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Jack Smith/Schultz Fuels Reduction and Forest Health Project on the Peaks Ranger District. The Final Environmental Assessment (EA), appendices, maps, and Decision Notice/FONSI are included in this package.

Collaborative Process and Public Involvement

This EA and Decision are the result of months of collaboration with Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership (GFFP), a diverse, community-based group dedicated to reducing the risk of wildfire to communities and restoring ecosystem health to the ponderosa pine forests surrounding Flagstaff. The goal of this collaborative effort is to develop solutions to local forest health and fire hazard concerns by involving the greater Flagstaff community.

Healthy Forests Restoration Act Authority

This project was planned and analyzed under authorization of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA), which was designed to expedite the preparation and implementation of hazardous fuels reduction projects on federal lands. Use of this authority helps streamline the planning process and allows the Districts to implement the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for the greater Flagstaff area, which was developed by numerous local and state organizations and agencies. Appendix B of the EA is an HFRA compliance document that provides additional detail about HFRA authorities and requirements.

Selected Alternative

It is my decision to select Alternative 2, as I have detailed in the Decision Notice, as the preferred alternative for this project.

A summary of actions to be accomplished under Alternative 2 is included in the attached Decision Notice, and a complete description of Alternative 2 activities and mitigation and monitoring measures is located in Chapter 2 of the EA.

The attached Decision Notice also provides a complete discussion of my rationale for selection.

Alternative 2 addresses the purpose and need for action from a fuels, vegetation, and transportation system management perspective, while meeting all requirements of the Forest Plan. Alternative 2 would reduce flame lengths, fuel loads, and crown fire potential, and allow low to moderate surface fires to take place. Alternative 2 would reduce canopy cover and stand densities while restoring a diverse, uneven-age forest structure that is essential for understory diversity and wildlife habitat.



Timing of Project Decision and Implementation

A Notice of Availability of this Final Decision/FONSI has been filed with the newspaper of record, the Arizona Daily Sun. Implementation may begin immediately after publication that the decision has been made.

For more information regarding the project, please contact:

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The Final EA, Decision Notice/FONSI, and additional information regarding this project can be found on the Coconino National Forest website at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/nepa/index.shtml>.

I would like to thank everyone for their participation in this planning effort. This EA and Decision are the culmination of over a year of meetings, field trips, and passionate discussions over forest management in the area. The partners who have worked together to find innovative and common solutions to forest health and fire risk concerns have added tremendous value to the project. I am confident that this alternative will best meet the needs of the public and the forests surrounding the greater Flagstaff community, while complying with forest plan direction.

Sincerely,

/s/ Joseph P. Stringer
JOSEPH P. STRINGER
Deputy Forest Supervisor