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Flagstaff Area National Monuments News Release

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Road Construction Work Planned For Wupatki – Sunset Crater Volcano Scenic Loop Road

FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA – Rehabilitation of the Wupatki – Sunset Crater Volcano Scenic Loop Road, also known as Forest Road 545, is scheduled to begin in early March. The Scenic Loop Road is the primary access route for both Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument and Wupatki National Monument, including the Visitor Centers for both parks, as well as the primary visitor attractions in the two parks – the Lennox Crater Trail, the Bonito Lava Flow loop trail, and the many beautiful and well-preserved pueblos of Wupatki National Monument. Also planned in the project is the rehabilitation and improvement of the visitor parking area at the Wupatki National Monument Visitor Center, creating improved parking stalls and a wider turnaround for tour busses and other large vehicles.

The project will rehabilitate approximately 22 miles of deteriorated and worn road surface, extending from Wupatki National Monument’s north entrance off Highway 89, continuing through the entire park, and ending at the Coconino National Forest boundary, about five miles south of Wupatki’s south entrance. The road surface will be pulverized, scraped clean, and resurfaced with new road base and asphalt. Work is scheduled to be completed by mid-to-late summer.

The \$5.7 million dollar project is being funded and administered by the Federal Highway Administration, in partnership with the National Park Service and the USDA Forest Service. The National Park Service and Federal Highway Administration are committed to maintaining ‘shared-use’ of the road during the project. As a result, both parks and the Scenic Loop Road will be open during construction, with a maximum of 30 minute’s worth of delays for a trip around the entire Scenic Loop Road. No construction activities are currently planned on Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays, allowing minimal disruption for weekend visitors to the two parks for the duration of the project.

“We’re excited to see this much-needed project getting underway”, commented Superintendent Palma Wilson. “The new and improved road will allow a safer and more enjoyable experience for visitors driving the Scenic Loop, while providing enhanced protection of resources with improved turnouts, parking areas, and road shoulders.”

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