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**File Code:** 1950  
**Date:** June 21, 2016

Dear Interested Party:

On behalf of the Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, and Tonto National Forests, we are providing you an opportunity to comment on the enclosed Rim Country Project proposal to conduct restoration activities within 1.24 million acres of ponderosa pine ecosystem over approximately 10 years. Treatment areas are located on the Black Mesa, and Lakeside Ranger Districts of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, the Mogollon and Red Rock Ranger Districts of the Coconino National Forest, and the Payson and Pleasant Valley Ranger Districts of the Tonto National Forest. Project treatments would occur in the vicinity of Happy Jack, Payson, Young, Heber-Overgaard, Show Low, and Pinetop-Lakeside, Arizona. The Rim Country Project is part of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) and its purpose is to re-establish forest structure, pattern, and composition, which will lead to increased forest resilience and function. Resiliency increases the ability of ponderosa pine forest to survive natural disturbances such as insect and disease, fire, and climate change.

### **Opportunity to Comment on the Proposed Action**

The intent of this comment period is to provide those interested in or affected by this proposed action with an opportunity to make their concerns known. We invite you to provide any substantive comments you might have regarding the proposed action for the 4FRI Rim Country Project, those that are within the scope of the project and the decision to be made, are specific to the proposed activities and the project area, and have a direct relationship to the project. Please provide supporting reasons for us to consider. If you cite or include references with your comments, please state specifically how those references relate to the proposed action. Please include hard copies or internet links to any references to which you refer. It is important that reviewers provide their comments at such times and in such manner that they are useful to the agency's preparation of the environmental impact statement. Therefore, comments should be provided prior to the close of the comment period and should clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns and contentions.

Written, hand-delivered, electronic, oral, and facsimile comments concerning this proposed action will be accepted for 45 calendar days following the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the Federal Register. The publication date is expected to be June 24, 2016; therefore, to be most useful, comments for the Rim Country Project should be received by August 8, 2016.

You may send written comments to Coconino National Forest, Attention: 4FRI, 1824 S. Thompson Street, Flagstaff, Arizona 86001. Comments may also be sent via e-mail to [4FRI\\_comments@fs.fed.us](mailto:4FRI_comments@fs.fed.us), or via facsimile to (928) 527-3620.

This proposed project is an action implementing three land management plans and is subject to the objection process described in 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B. As such, individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to file a predecisional objection must meet the information requirements in 36 CFR 218. Names and contact



information submitted with comments will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act. However, comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered.

In addition to using the commenting options described above, public meetings are planned during the scoping period for the purposes of discussing and gathering comments specific to the proposed action. At this time, we are planning meetings on Thursday, July 14, in Show Low, AZ, and on Thursday, July 21 in Payson, AZ. For times and locations and other meetings scheduled, please visit our 4FRI website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/4fri>.

Thank you for your interest in this project. Please visit the 4FRI website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/4fri> for more information, or contact Annette Fredette, 4FRI Planning Coordinator, at 928-226-4684.

Sincerely,

  
LAURA JO WEST  
Forest Supervisor

  
M. STEPHEN BEST  
Forest Supervisor

  
for NEIL BOSWORTH  
Forest Supervisor

cc: Scott Russell, Annette  
Fredette, Katherine Sanchez  
Meador