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# News Release

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## **Sunflower and Ike fires to be utilized for achieving land management objectives**

**Williams, Ariz., July 25, 2016—For Immediate Release.** Recent moisture from monsoonal rains have created favorable conditions on the Williams Ranger District prompting Kaibab National Forest officials to utilize the lightning caused “Sunflower” and “Ike” fires to spread in a natural progression within a designated planning area.

Each fire is carefully considered with an extensive process that includes consideration of potential short- and long-term smoke impacts to communities. The intent is to re-introduce fire back into the adapted environment, enhance overall forest health, reduce hazardous fuel loads, and protect valued resources while providing for firefighter and public safety first.

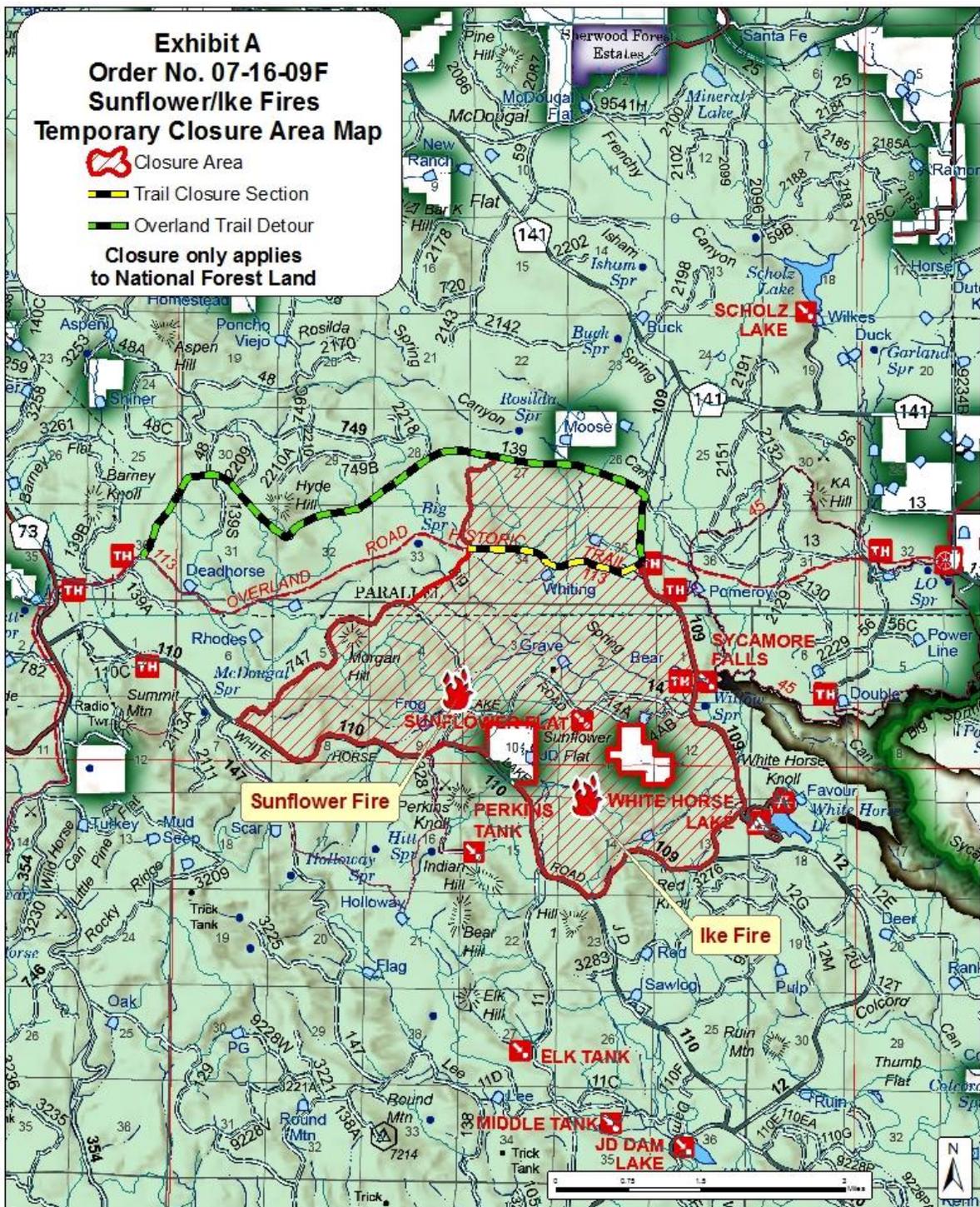
Objectives for this strategy include using low to moderate intensity fire with occasional high severity intensities to consume accumulations of dead and down woody debris from the forest floor. Additionally, burning off the understory fuels help raise the canopy heights of the older trees ultimately protecting them from being lost to a potential catastrophic fire event in the future.

There are a number of additional benefits for allowing fire to burn in a natural setting, which include protection of wildlife habitat, historic heritage sites, vital watersheds, critical infrastructure, and residential expansions that fall within the urban interface where human developments meet the forest. Soils also become replenished with nutrients as burnt organic material decomposes into the ground stimulating new growth of native forbs and grasses.

A Forest Area Closure Order (#07-16-09-F) has been implemented in the vicinity of the fire that includes the following areas: North of Forest Roads (FR) 110 and 109, East of FR 747 and Big Spring Wash, then South of FR 139 and West of FR 109.

Smoke will be noticeable and may periodically impact nearby communities that include Williams, Parks, Bellemont, Pittman Valley, Chino Valley, Prescott, Camp Verde, Flagstaff and Sedona. Monitoring smoke production levels will be a top priority for fire managers who are prepared to take specific actions to reduce amounts effecting rural areas.

Additional fire information for the Kaibab National Forest can be obtained through the following sources: InciWeb <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4884/> <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4885/> ; Kaibab National Forest Fire Information Phone Line (928) 635-8311; Text Message – text ‘follow kaibabnf’ to 40404.



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