

# Bill Williams Mountain Restoration Project

PARTNERS IN RESTORATION



National Forest  
Foundation



## News Release

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### **Steep Slope Fuels Reduction Treatments on Bill Williams Mountain Resume This Fall**

**WILLIAMS, Ariz., August 11, 2021** — The 2nd phase of hazardous fuel removal from the steep slopes of Bill Williams Mountain is beginning this month. Markit! Forestry Management of Colorado Springs, Colorado has been awarded the contract to treat the next 176 acres of the Bill Williams Mountain Restoration Project, a collaborative effort between federal, state, local, and non-profit partners.

Crews have begun preparing roads, clearing a landing site, delivering equipment and supplies, and bringing in sawyers, in preparation for the arrival of the helicopter that will begin yarding material off the mountain later this month. Helicopters will be noticeable to residents and businesses in and around the City of Williams both audibly and visually. Aerial operations will be occurring seven days a week during daylight hours when weather conditions are conducive for safe operations.

Due to the hazardous nature of the work involving aircraft and heavy equipment, the Forest Service is issuing a temporary area closure for public and crew safety on and around the mountain. Details of the closure will be available on the [Kaibab National Forest 'Alerts and Notices' pages](#).

The first 300 acres of this restoration project were successfully completed at the end of 2020. Many of the same techniques will be used. Sawyers will cut and bundle woody material in preparation for removal from the most difficult terrain on the highest slopes of the mountain. A long cable suspended below the helicopter is attached to the bundled material which is then flown to a lower landing site for processing, loading, transport off the mountain by trucks. There will be a noticeable increase in traffic within city limits as hauling vehicles begin transporting material out of Williams.

In early 2019, a collaborative partnership between the Kaibab National Forest, The National Forest Foundation, and Coconino County was formed to begin the task of removing hazardous fuels off the

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steepest slopes of Bill Williams Mountain. Through this collaborative, and along with other key funding partners such as the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management and the Arizona Water Protection Fund, stakeholders are addressing the goal to reduce risks to life and property and protect critical watershed drainages that deliver the vital water supply to the City of Williams and communities to the south.

"This project continues to be top priority for the Kaibab National Forest. It is critical that we reduce the risk of a destructive wildfire and the probability of post-wildfire flooding that would likely have devastating effects on the mountain's natural resources and on essential infrastructure and neighborhoods in the community below," says Andy Kelher, Acting Williams and Tusayan District Ranger for the Kaibab NF.

Coconino County modeling has identified the number one health and safety threat to the residents of the County to be severe fire and post-wildfire flooding like that seen this summer in the Museum Fire burn scar in Flagstaff. Proactive forest restoration is essential to reduce the risk of these events.

"Partnership is key to this important forest restoration initiative on Bill Williams Mountain. It takes each of these local, state, federal, and non-profit partners having a seat at the table to accomplish the necessary work of reducing the density of trees on these steep slopes. As a gateway to the Grand Canyon, the City of Williams would experience huge economic impacts if wildfire and post-wildfire flooding were to occur. Investing now in forest restoration is key to mitigating these threats," said Chairman of the Coconino County Board of Supervisors, Matt Ryan.

As the Forest Service's congressionally chartered non-profit partner, the National Forest Foundation works to enhance conservation and recreation across America's public lands. "The Bill Williams Mountain Restoration Project exemplifies NFF's mission through its successful partnerships, forest restoration goals, benefits to sustainable recreation and protection for the City of Williams and many downstream communities. Partnering on the Bill Williams project illustrates our collective strength in collaboration as we bring resources together to successfully tackle this immense challenge and endeavor together to meet our aligned goals. Everyone has a role to play." says Rebecca Davidson, NFF's Southern Rockies Regional Director.

Project managers aim to complete this 2nd stage of thinning before snow arrives this year. There are approximately 725 additional acres on the steep slopes identified for future treatment as the next phases of this project move forward. Active restoration efforts will continue on the lower, more accessible areas of the mountain that will include timber sale contracts as well as hand thinning and piling projects.

Additional Information can be found online: [Kaibab National Forest website](#), [Bill Williams Mountain Restoration Project Environmental Impact Statement](#), [Coconino County Flood Control District](#), [The National Forest Foundation](#), [MarkIt! Forestry](#), [The Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management](#), [Kaibab National Forest Flickr](#)