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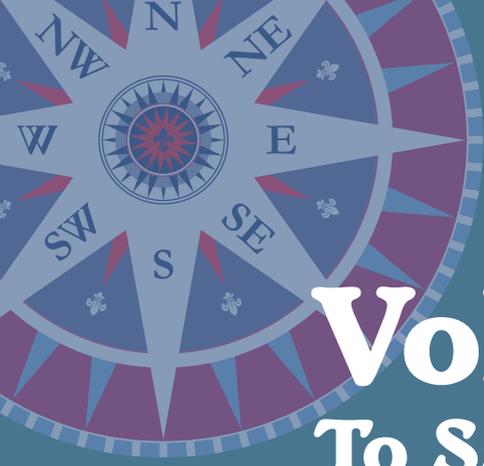


Forest Service
Southwestern
Region



Kaibab National Forest: 2009 Accomplishment Report

<http://fs.usda.gov/kaibab>



Volunteers Work To Save Fragments of the Past

History can be found in a variety of places by those interested enough to seek it out. Museum display cases, interpretive signs and thick volumes on library shelves come to mind. But before those facts, dates and stories can be made accessible, someone has to gather all the little pieces and figure out how they fit together.

For history buffs fortunate enough to visit the Arizona Strip, those “pieces” are often still found scattered in the dust where they’ve sat undisturbed for many lifetimes.

“To think that you’re probably the first person to touch this in 1,000 years; that gets me every time,” said Brent Layton, as he held up one of many small, textured pottery fragments scattered about an ancient pueblo site on the North Kaibab Ranger District.

Layton, a St. George-area resident and volunteer site steward, was one of 22 participants in this year’s Passport in Time project on the North Kaibab district. The group spent a week in September under the guidance of Kaibab National Forest archaeologists surveying previously uncharted pueblo sites for the benefit of future historical inquiries.

Passport in Time, commonly known as PIT, is a volunteer archaeology and historic preservation program. The information gathered during the project will be logged in a database and a site steward, like Layton, will check on the site periodically to report whether any vandalism or looting has occurred. One of the foremost goals of these projects is preservation, not just of the artifacts, but of the information they can provide.

Textured pottery fragments are known as “sherds.”



Anywhere on the esplanade [Kanab Creek Wilderness] is a gorgeous surreal landscape, and one of the quietest places on earth I’m convinced! Although you have to be careful in deciding when to hike into Kanab Creek (the heat can make you crazy), it is one of those places where you are surrounded by sky, red rock, and solitude. It reminds you what it is to be human.

Melissa Spandl
Recreation Technician, Wilderness and Trails
North Kaibab Ranger District





From the Forest Supervisor

As I reflect on 2009 and all we accomplished on the Kaibab National Forest during those twelve short months, my thoughts go first to the people who did that work or contributed to it in some way – employees, cooperators, retirees, partners, permittees and volunteers. They've earned my thanks and gratitude, and they deserve appreciation for all for their hard work, dedication and commitment to public service.

Some key accomplishments truly stand out. On the top of that list is the fact that we were one of only two forests in the Southwestern Region of the Forest Service to complete our Rescission Act National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses. This federal legislation, more than 10 years old now, requires each National Forest to establish and adhere to a schedule for completing environmental analyses on grazing allotments. We finished the last one on the list in 2009, and it was only through the diligent efforts of many current and several now-retired employees that this incredible milestone has been reached.

Also during 2009, the Kaibab National Forest entered into the first project-level Stewardship Agreement ever in the Southwestern Region. Our agreement with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to accomplish forest restoration and wildlife habitat improvement work covers the entire Williams Ranger District for the next 10 years, with the initial work to be accomplished on nearly 1,800 acres in the Dogtown Project area southeast of the City of Williams. This unique agreement will allow us to use the value of timber harvested to fund other important forest restoration work including pre-commercial thinning, grassland restoration, fencing of aspen clones, road management and more. I'm extremely excited about this monumental agreement and the critical forest health work that we'll be able to accomplish.

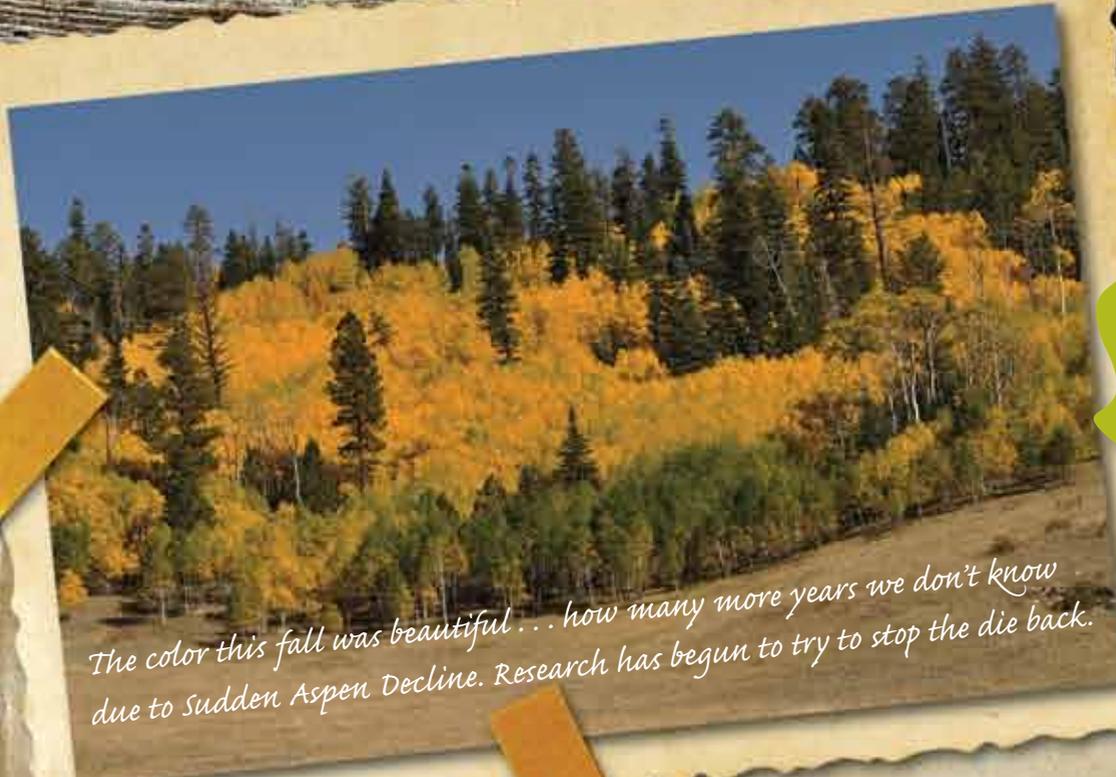
Finally, I wanted to highlight the exceptional work of our fire and fuels management organization and all of our employees who tirelessly supported our fire management activities during 2009. During the fiscal year, 12 wildfires were managed to achieve all sorts of resource objectives, burning a total of nearly 45,000 acres across all three ranger districts on the Forest. Besides those acres, almost 14,000 more were treated using hazardous fuels reduction funds. This was a truly unprecedented scale of accomplishment and required long hours, days, weeks and months of hard work by many employees from all resource areas.

There are so many other accomplishments that I could single out for acknowledgement, but I'll let this *2009 Kaibab National Forest Accomplishment Report* speak for us. From our work on American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (economic recovery) projects creating jobs in our communities, to our planning efforts as part of the 4-Forest Restoration Initiative, which is seeking to implement landscape scale restoration across the Mogollon Rim, Kaibab National Forest employees continue to set the bar high for us all.

With the support of our partners, neighbors and friends, I look forward to continued success in 2010. Thank you!

Mike Williams
Forest Supervisor





The color this fall was beautiful . . . how many more years we don't know due to Sudden Aspen Decline. Research has begun to try to stop the die back.

**Yes,
There
really are
trees in Arizona.**

Patrick Lair
Public Affairs Specialist
North Kaibab Ranger District

By Bonnie Stevens

The Color of Fall May Be Fading Away; Biologists are calling it SAD

The soft sound of quaking aspen leaves trembling on the slightest breeze is the sound of summer in the mountains of the West. But that sound has become softer and researchers believe the color of fall may be fading, too. This because of an extraordinarily rapid dieback of the aspen, a phenomenon biologists are calling SAD, or Sudden Aspen Decline. In northern Arizona, Forest Service officials are reporting some 60 to 95 percent mortality in the low-elevation aspen groves, around 7,000 feet, of the Kaibab and Coconino National Forests.

Recent drought years and warmer temperatures may be playing a role in SAD, making the trees more vulnerable to a suite of pests and pathogens. The year 2000 was the worst drought year on record in Arizona until that record was broken in 2002. And the drought years aren't over. Most climate models predict a warmer and much drier future climate in the Southwest and extreme events, such as droughts, are expected to increase in frequency and magnitude.

Ironically, on a place called Aspen Hill south of Williams, researchers have been unable to find any aspen except in a small grove that has been fenced off from animals, because the deer and elk aren't helping the aspen any either. "We found more than 98 percent of aspen trees surveyed are browsed by ungulates," said forester Mike French of the Kaibab National Forest. Researchers say herbivores are attracted to aspen trees the same way kids are attracted to ice cream.

Researchers don't know if SAD has damaged the root systems – whether through climate change, insects, diseases, browsing animals or lack of frequent fire – to the point that aspen groves won't sprout new suckers. If a root system dies, they fear that particular DNA could be lost forever.

The Kaibab National Forest engaged the School of Forestry [Northern Arizona University] and the Ecological Restoration Institute in a joint research effort to find out what's happening to the aspen and whether this popular deciduous tree is fading permanently from the landscape of its lower elevation range.

Fredonia Fifth Graders Spend a Day in the Woods

How often do you get the chance to hurl an atlatl at a prehistoric animal, drill into a tree to determine its age, or listen to the world the way a bat hears it?

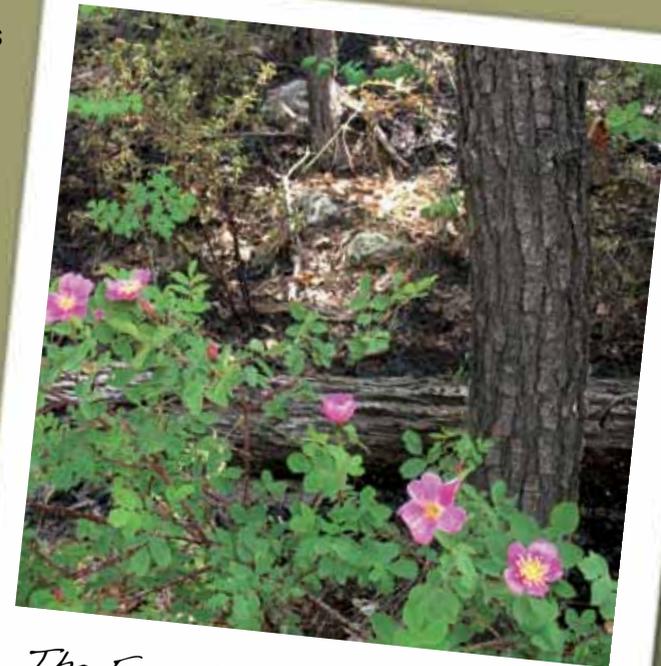
Those are just a few of the activities that 26 Fredonia fifth graders got to experience during Kids in the Woods Day, hosted Aug. 27, at Jacob Lake by the North Kaibab Ranger District. Aided by a grant from the Forest Service, which was intended to get more of the country's kids out into nature, district employees set up a variety of activities to help give kids an appreciation for the natural world and for the various conservation activities that take place in the forests.

Kids spent the day with district biologists, archaeologists, range and recreation specialists, forest technicians and silviculturists.

Activities included roping a rubber steer and petting a horse, unpacking the gear used by a typical fire crew, and operating the fire hose. Kids got to use a hand-held GPS unit to navigate through the woods and learned about a lesser-understood resident of this area, the bat. Archaeologists discussed the prehistoric cultures of the Kaibab Plateau, showed a few artifacts, and helped the kids make pottery of their own.

Participants also got to drill into a tree and count the rings on the core sample, split open a pine cone to inspect the seeds, and measure the tree heights to estimate their growth rates.

The North Kaibab Kids in the Woods Day is one of seven programs that comprises the More Kids in the Northern Arizona Woods project. In July, More Kids in the Northern Arizona Woods received \$50,000 out of a \$500,000 nationwide grant from the Forest Service to increase the time children spend in nature.



The Forest offers wonder and beauty to visitors of all ages.



Kaibab National Forest Archaeologist Wins Regional Recognition

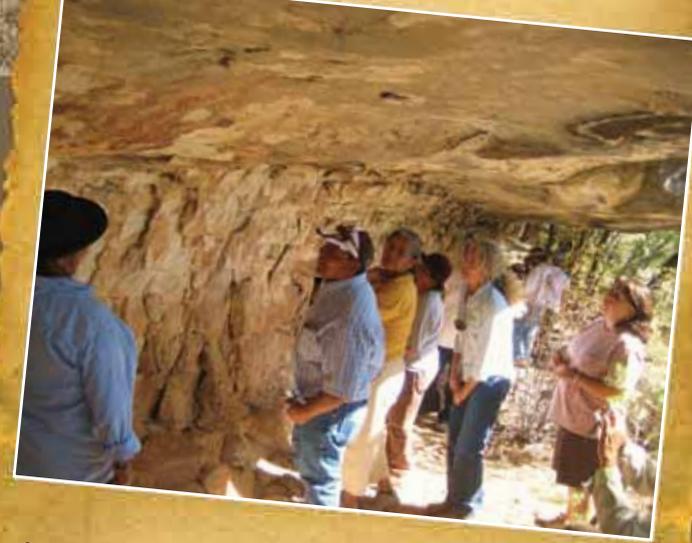
An archaeologist for the Williams and Tusayan districts of the Kaibab National Forest received regional recognition and an opportunity to win a national award for his dedication to educating the public about natural resources.

Archaeologist Neil Weintraub, who has worked on the Kaibab National Forest for 19 years, was selected as the Forest Service Southwestern Region nominee for the 2009 Gifford Pinchot Excellence in Interpretation and Conservation Education Award.

Southwestern Regional Forester Corbin Newman wrote in a letter to the Chief of the Forest Service that it was Weintraub's "long-term commitment to educating and involving the public in appreciating and preserving" the Kaibab National Forest's and the Southwest's rich historic and pre-historic past that resulted in his regional recognition and submission as a nominee for the prestigious national award.

According to the application package prepared for Weintraub, he was nominated "not because of a single event or accomplishment but rather a career's worth of effort to promote awareness of and instill respect for Southwestern forests and their vulnerable archaeological artifacts through his uncanny ability to connect with people."

"I have always believed that as archaeologists, we need to make our job relevant to the public and to our forest managers and forest users," Weintraub said. "By educating the public, they too become stewards of the land."



Kaibab National Forest Archaeologists Win Statewide Awards

Kaibab National Forest archaeologists received statewide recognition as part of the Governor's Heritage Preservation Honor Awards. The awards recognize people, organizations, and projects that represent outstanding achievements in preserving Arizona's prehistoric and historic resources.

Specifically, the Kaibab National Forest Heritage Program received the Government Agency Award in Public Archaeology. The Kaibab National Forest is also a partner in two organizations that received the Private/Non-Profit Entity Award in Public Archaeology. Those organizations are the Grand Canyon Flagstaff Stage Coach Line Partnership and the Kaibab Vermilion Cliffs Heritage Alliance.

"It was fantastic to have our Forest heritage program be recognized and to also have the important partnerships of which we are a part be recognized as well," said Margaret Hangan, Kaibab National Forest heritage program manager. "To be singled out by our peers and the Governor's Commission is truly a unique honor."



Fire prevention specialist Bob Blasi, Tusayan District Ranger Angela Parker, and Smokey Bear visit Grand Canyon National Park



Not your ordinary staff meeting ...

I have many favorite places on the Kaibab. One that comes to mind is Round Mountain Lookout where you get a view of the whole south end of the Williams district from the Sycamore Rim up to Bill Williams Mountain. When I very first worked here in 1975, my boss took me up there to give me good perspective on the district and our management plans at the time.

John Holmes, Timber Management Assistant, Williams and Tusayan Ranger Districts



Trail Crew
 The trail crew accomplished an incredible amount of work during summer 2009. Of particular note was the work done on the four trails accessing Kendrick Mountain Wilderness. Crew members cut and removed more than 500 downed trees from the trails in order to keep them open for public use. Avid hikers should plan a trip to any one of the four rehabilitated trails!



*Wilderness Volunteers -
 North Canyon Trail Project.
 A working vacation!*



Volunteers Complete North Canyon Trail Project

Say the word "vacation" and many people think hotels, beaches, amusement parks or even a cruise. But how many dream of strenuous physical labor?

Turns out some do. The Wilderness Volunteers has been leading backcountry work projects around the United States for the last 12 years, including projects on the North Kaibab Ranger District. In mid-September, 13 participants spent a week building steps into an eroded section of the North Canyon Trail and conducting general trail maintenance in Saddle Mountain Wilderness.

"People come from all over to work in these special places," said Debbie Northcutt, project leader and co-founder of the Wilderness Volunteers. "We try to provide opportunities that are affordable to students and people from all walks of life." Northcutt, a Flagstaff resident, has completed 22 such projects on the North Kaibab since 1984.

During the week, volunteers camped at 8,800 feet and hiked nearly two miles each day to the work site. The workers hauled hand saws, hand drills, rope, hammers, buckets and other tools down a series of steep switchbacks to build the steps next to North Canyon Spring.

HERITAGE

The Kaibab National Forest heritage program conducted 57 projects, surveyed 1,622 acres of land, recorded 74 new National Register-eligible archaeological sites, and monitored the condition of about 209 previously recorded sites during fiscal year 2009.

Archaeologists planned and led restoration efforts at the historic Jump Up Cabin on the North Kaibab Ranger District and continued rehabilitation of the Tusayan district's Hull Cabin in preparation for its entry into the Arizona Cabin Rental Program.

Volunteers continued to play an enormously important role in monitoring and inventorying sites. In fact, volunteers from the Arizona Site Stewards and Kaibab Vermilion Cliffs Heritage Alliance, along with

archaeological interns from Grinnell College in Iowa, and individual volunteers Don Christensen and Ross and Maiya Gralia, contributed 2,939 hours of their time.

Forest archaeologists also provided more than 50 heritage education outreach programs including talks, tours and presentations for Archaeology and Heritage Awareness Month in March, the Williams Middle School Science Camp, and the annual Arizona Archaeology Expo, along with providing training for Forest Service employees and volunteers, presenting professional papers, and hosting the Southwestern Region annual heritage program meeting.

Kaibab National Forest Signs **First-Ever** Stewardship Project Agreement in the Southwestern Region

With not even a full day left in fiscal year 2009, the Kaibab National Forest entered into the first project-level stewardship agreement ever in the Forest Service Southwestern Region. The agreement with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation will allow the Forest to use the value of timber harvested to fund other important stewardship work such as pre-commercial thinning, grassland restoration, fencing of aspen clones, and road management.

"This agreement is important in that it provides the Kaibab National Forest with another avenue for accomplishing needed forest restoration and fuels reduction work," said timber specialist John Holmes. "This is going to give us the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of this type of agreement in accomplishing work effectively and efficiently."

The agreement covers the entire Williams Ranger District for a term of 10 years. The initial work to be done is part of the

Dogtown Project and includes harvesting timber on 1,743 acres. The value of that timber will be applied toward other work to achieve desired forest and habitat conditions.

"This is especially important with the fluctuating markets for forest products," Holmes said. "This agreement provides needed flexibility to utilize markets as they develop that will facilitate the accomplishment of the work to be done on the project." Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's role in the agreement is similar to that of a general contractor. The foundation has already started making arrangements with local subcontractors to begin work on the Dogtown Project.

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's director of habitat stewardship services, Al Christophersen, visited the Kaibab National Forest in June and toured the Dogtown Project area. "Once I saw the forest restoration work being done on the Williams district and the

habitat and restoration needs in the Dogtown Lake area, I knew the Dogtown Project presented the right opportunity for Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to enter into a new stewardship project agreement," Christophersen said.

Earlier in 2009, the Forest Service Southwestern Region entered into a master stewardship agreement with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation that sets a regional framework for project-level supplemental agreements, like the one just signed with the Kaibab National Forest. The regional framework identifies mutual goals for the foundation and Southwestern forests, namely restoring fire adapted ecosystems and improving wildlife habitat conditions.

"I'm truly looking forward to a productive partnership with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation here on the Kaibab over the next 10 years and hopefully beyond," said Kaibab National Forest Supervisor Mike

Williams. "Working together we can accomplish much more habitat and ecosystem improvement work than we could working separately."

In 1999, the Forest Service received pilot authority via legislation to enter into stewardship projects "to achieve land management goals for the national forests that meet local and rural community needs."

In 2003, that authority was given for a 10-year period through 2013, and efforts are underway to make the authority permanent. The primary focus of the legislation is to achieve land management goals through stewardship projects awarded under contracts or agreements. Unique to the legislation is the ability to exchange goods for services that meet land management objectives.



Wildlife Management

WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

West Side Mule Deer Habitat Improvement Project: The Forest partnered with Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) on a large multi-year project to improve habitat within critical mule deer winter range on the west side of the North Kaibab district. Habitat improvements completed in 2009 included planting key mule deer browse plants (cliffrose, four-wing saltbush and sagebrush), thinning junipers to increase forage and browse production, and herbicide treatments of cheatgrass.

Wetland Protection: Wetlands provide important habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal species and are especially important on the dry Kaibab. The Forest worked with Grand Canyon Trust and volunteers to build post-and-pole fences around Murray's Lake and Glen Lake on the North Kaibab district. The Williams district initiated a project to add a quarter-inch steel cable to the top of existing fences around four large ephemeral wetlands (Davenport Lake, Coleman Lake, Moritz Lake and JD Lake). These enhancements will substantially improve long-term effectiveness and reduce maintenance costs of the fences.

Aspen Protection: Aspen forests are widely recognized for their importance as biologically diverse wildlife habitat, as well as their aesthetic and recreational values. These values are at risk on the Williams district because aspen conditions are poor and declining. A variety of factors are likely impacting aspen, but one problem is lack of recruitment (young aspen trees surviving long enough to reach maturity) due to frequent browsing by elk, deer and livestock. The Williams district built six new fences around aspen stands and conducted maintenance on 30 existing fences.

Ida Grassland Maintenance Project: Grasslands and pronghorn antelope populations have declined from historic levels in northern Arizona. The Forest partnered with AZGFD to cut down juniper trees from 3,450 acres of the Ida project area on the Williams district in order to improve habitat for pronghorn and other grassland species.

Tusayan Wildlife Waters Project: Volunteers from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and biologists from AZGFD finished construction of a water pipeline and wildlife water developments along that pipeline on the Tusayan district. The goal of the project is more reliable water sources for wildlife.

“Animals are not the only things that get caught in fishing line, people do too.”

Local Church Group Aids Forest Wildlife



During summer 2009, 21 girls belonging to a local church group volunteered with the Kaibab National Forest to clean up trash and fishing line, known to be harmful to wildlife. The girls, who ranged in age from 12 to 17, scoured Kaibab Lake on the Williams Ranger District picking up bottle caps, plastic bottles, wrappers and monofilament fishing line from the water's edge.

To give context to the service project, wildlife biologist Jeff Waters explained that fishing line can be especially harmful to birds. “Back in 2007, we had a turkey vulture and a great blue heron get tangled up in fishing line,” Waters told the group. “One of the birds was so dehydrated and weak that it was unable to properly digest food. It was rescued and rehydrated before being released back into the wild.”

The girls collected 13 bags of trash and fishing line and, along the way, found everything from disintegrating line buried in pine needles to beer cans and soda bottles.

Williams Ranger District campground concessionaire, Southwest Recreation, provided the trash bags for the day.

“Animals are not the only things that get caught in fishing line, people do too,” exclaimed one of the girls as she untangled herself from some line she was trying to pick up.

Every year, the church group holds a girls camp. And, although a service project is not required, chaperone Chris Farr said she felt that this year the service project was a very important part of camp. “The girls really enjoyed the service project, and I think it really opened their eyes to their surroundings. I know from now on when I go to a lake, I’m going to be looking for fishing line and garbage and picking it up more.”

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) manages a statewide monofilament fishing line recycling program, which supplies popular fishing spots with special collection tubes. On

the Williams Ranger District, collection tubes are available at the developed campgrounds.

“Game and Fish collects and recycles fishing line to reduce the hazard to wildlife,” explained Chuck Benedict, AZGFD fisheries specialist. “When we collect enough to recycle, we send it into Berkley, one of the top fishing product manufacturers.”

Berkley then cleans and melts down the old fishing line, making it into artificial fish habitats. Recycled line can also be made into new fishing line, lures and tackle boxes. During the service project, the girls collected enough line that Kaibab National Forest employees made a special trip to the Arizona Game and Fish Department office in Flagstaff to recycle it.

NAU FORESTRY STUDENTS PROTECT ASPEN ON KAIBAB NATIONAL FOREST

The Northern Arizona University Forestry Club teamed with the Kaibab National Forest in late April to repair one of the forest's damaged aspen fences, with the goal of protecting the struggling trees growing within.

In recent years, much of the aspen in the western United States has declined dramatically and inexplicably. Aspen fences are designed to protect aspen seedlings and sprouts from being eaten by elk and deer. In the West, these fences are common and important tools to promote the survival of aspen.

The Kaibab National Forest has constructed 32 fences, but to successfully exclude elk and other ungulates, the fences require continued maintenance and repair. The NAU Forestry Club volunteers twice a year to repair aspen fences for the Forest Service.

“It was great to be able to work on a project that will impact the future of the aspen in northern Arizona. It was especially good to see all of the regeneration,” said Kari Potter, NAU forestry student. Although many of the larger aspen trees were dead or dying, there was some thriving regeneration within the fenced area – a bright spot in the aspen decline story.

Engineering

Several important facilities and roads projects on the Kaibab National Forest were started or completed by the engineering team in fiscal year 2009. On the North Kaibab Ranger District, a new shower and laundry building is under construction at the Big Springs Work Center to complement the upcoming renovation of several living quarters. Preliminary planning and an environmental assessment were completed for the proposed consolidation of the North Kaibab Ranger Station and Tanglefoot Work Center into a new ranger station facility in Fredonia. Construction funding for this project is being pursued.

Visitors to the Williams Ranger District will enjoy another phase of the ongoing rehabilitation of Kaibab Lake Campground. Campsites on two additional road loops were outfitted with new tables and fire rings. Three toilet buildings were replaced at White Horse Lake Campground.

About 12 miles of forest roads 12 and 105 leading to White Horse Lake, JD Dam Lake, and then to Pine Flat were resurfaced with gravel. Annual maintenance and grading were completed on 799 miles of forest roads on the Williams, Tusayan and North Kaibab districts. Route marker signs at road junctions are being checked and new ones installed where necessary. So far, 100 percent of the route marker signs on the Tusayan district and 20 percent on the Williams district have been completed.

Northern Arizona University Students Help Plan Forest Project

The Kaibab National Forest collaborated with Northern Arizona University students to explore issues and potential concerns regarding a proposed fuels reduction project in Williams known as the Bill Williams Cap Project. The partnership afforded students in Professor Carolyn Daugherty's Planning 402W class the opportunity to gain hands-on experience implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) while providing the Forest with valuable insight and information to be used in the analysis process.

The students divided into separate resource areas – fire and fuels, watershed and soils, vegetation, wildlife, cultural resources, recreation, and public concern – and analyzed the effects the Bill Williams Cap Project would have on their specific disciplines. Students

spent four weeks on the project and then presented their findings to Kaibab National Forest resource specialists. The students' findings showed the benefits of the proposed project significantly outweighed the risks involved if no action was taken to remove hazardous fuels before a fire occurs.

Overall, the students said it was a challenging exercise and a positive experience, and Forest managers said the time they spent with the students was worthwhile. "We owe the class a huge thanks for their hard work on the project," said Joe Reinartz, fire management officer for the Williams and Tusayan districts. "This is truly a win-win situation. The students gained experience on the NEPA process, and the information they provided will be useful as the project goes forward."

Recreation Management

During fiscal year 2009, the Kaibab National Forest recreation program had several opportunities to reduce facilities maintenance backlog, which has resulted in a number of new facilities for Forest visitors to enjoy.

At Kaibab Lake Campground on the Williams Ranger District, the upper campground loops had new picnic tables and fire rings installed, and a restroom facility was replaced. At White Horse Lake Campground, also on the Williams Ranger District, four new restrooms were installed replacing older facilities with safety hazards.

At the Kaibab National Forest Supervisor's Office in Williams, the parking lot was expanded and accessibility improvements were made at the front entrance, thanks to the efforts of City of Williams employees.

Also in fiscal year 2009, recreation managers completed the Kaibab National Forest Pocket Guide, a free publication intended to provide valuable information to Forest visitors. The guide includes a simplified Forest map with major access roads, general Forest information, and a listing of developed recreation facilities. It's a must-have for any Kaibab visitor and is available at Forest offices.

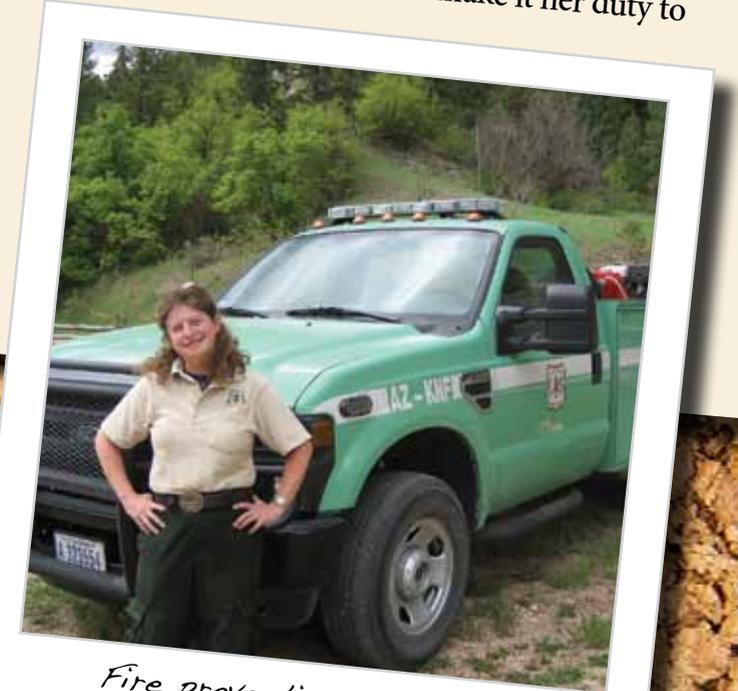


Kaibab National Forest Employees Award Scholarship To Local Senior

Kaibab National Forest employees awarded the 2009 employees' association scholarship to Nikhail Maestas. Maestas was awarded \$700 toward her continued education during a ceremony at Williams High School May 12. Applicants were assessed based on community involvement, commitment to a career in natural or physical sciences, and/or interest in the environment.

Maestas, a native of Arizona, became interested in the environment due to the shortage of water she witnessed growing up. She and her family live on a ranch where they raise cattle and horses. "I was scared by the lack of water in Arizona," said Maestas, who added that she will make it her duty to do her part in the preservation and restoration of the environment.

Each year, Kaibab National Forest employees raise money for this scholarship. The employees' association has contributed to the scholarship program for over a decade, raising approximately \$4,700, which has been awarded to local seniors.

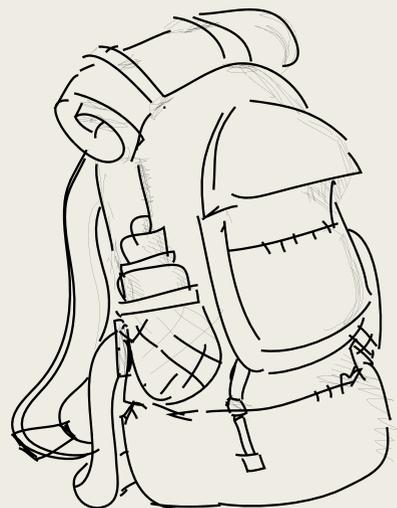


Fire prevention specialist Dana Cohen of the North Kaibab Ranger District. Another day in the office.



Pomeroy Tanks was one of the first places I visited on the Kaibab National Forest. And, in such an arid ecosystem, it is unique to find a year-round water source. Plus it is always fun to see the wildlife that the water source supports.

– Paul Hancock, NEPA Coordinator
Williams and Tusayan Ranger Districts





NKRD Seed Cone Collection

For the first time since 1997, North Kaibab Ranger District silviculture and timber personnel undertook a large seed cone collection project, with the goal of stocking ponderosa pine cone seed to replant areas of the 2006 Warm Fire. Over the course of three weeks in September, nine Kaibab National Forest employees collected more than 126 bushels of seed cones from ponderosa pine trees.

The collection group, headed by North Kaibab silviculturist Garry Domis and timber specialist Paul Callaway, first conducted a tree climbing class, then spent long hours each day in the trees gathering cones. The seeds were shipped to a seed bank in Lucky Point, Idaho, for storage until they are needed for replanting. In spring 2008, North Kaibab employees replanted 1,600 acres of the Warm Fire area and plan to replant another 900 acres in April 2010.

North Kaibab Receives Grant for Replanting

The North Kaibab Ranger District received a \$40,000 grant to help replant ponderosa and other pine trees as part of the Warm Fire Restoration Project. North Kaibab silviculturist Garry Domis said the money would allow planting of about 65,500 trees on 219 acres burned during the 2006 Warm Fire.

Replanting greatly accelerates the process of reforestation after a large fire, Domis said, a process that would take decades or longer to occur naturally. "Reforestation is a tremendous benefit after a fire disturbance," Domis said. "You're establishing green forest and ponderosa pine, which stabilizes the soils, creates important habitat for northern goshawk, stores carbon and produces oxygen, besides improving the scenic quality."

Funding for the grant was provided by the Salt River Project Trees for Change program. Through Trees for Change, the Phoenix-based utility provides matching contributions for customer monetary donations. The donations were sent to the National Forest Foundation, the official non-profit partner of the Forest Service, which decided to award the money to the North Kaibab replanting project.

Native Seed Collection and Use Following Fire

Range personnel from the Williams district collected native seed for use on areas that had burned at higher intensity levels on the 2009 Wild Horse and Twin fires. A "seed stripper" was mounted to a tractor and driven in an area with desirable plant species. After being collected in a hopper, the native seeds are then dumped into a pickup bed for bagging. About 200 pounds of plant materials were collected from three different sites for the projects. Then, specialists from lands and minerals, timber, and range, along with volunteers, helped spread the seed by hand on 31 acres of the Wild Horse Fire and 22 acres of the Twin Fire. The sites will be monitored in the coming years to evaluate the success of the seeding efforts.

INVENTORY AND MONITORING PROJECTS

Northern Leopard Frog Monitoring: Northern leopard frogs occurred historically on the Forest, but by 2005 there were no known populations remaining. Frog and other amphibian populations are declining regionally, nationally and globally. The Forest has been partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and AZGFD on a project to establish a refuge population of northern leopard frogs at a site within the House Rock Wildlife Area on the North Kaibab district. Biologists collected frog egg masses in southern Utah, reared them in tanks in Flagstaff, and released about 1,500 late-stage tadpoles in 2007 and 2008. Released frogs successfully reproduced in 2008 and 2009. Biologists have also been conducting surveys of tanks and wetlands on the Williams district where leopard frogs occurred historically, as well as other potentially suitable aquatic habitats. Although no leopard frogs were found, populations of other native amphibian species (western chorus frog, canyon tree frog, and tiger salamander) were documented, as well as populations of non-native bullfrogs.

Range, Watershed and Noxious Weeds

Livestock Grazing Management
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses were completed for the Corva and Double A Grazing allotments. The analyses reviewed the current grazing practices on 57,017 acres and made adjustments to those practices when necessary to maintain and improve range conditions. Also, grazing practice adjustments outlined in 2008 NEPA analyses were implemented in the Seven C Bar, Pine Creek and Twin Tanks allotments, which account for 21,359 acres. Improved grazing practices will result in better soil and watershed conditions. The Forest administered 31 grazing allotments during the 2009 grazing year. Forage production was good with consistent moisture in most areas throughout the year.

New monitoring protocols were established on the Forest to better determine range and watershed conditions and trends. These new methods provide statistically reliable data that can be compared to historic information.

Grassland Maintenance
Forest managers partnered with Arizona Game and Fish Department employees and range permittees to improve soil and watershed conditions on 2,701 acres of grasslands. The work focused on cutting pinyon and juniper trees that have encroached historic grasslands. Monitoring following the grassland treatments has shown substantial improvement in ground cover conditions.

Fire Rehabilitation
The Forest treated 525 acres in the areas burned by the Slide and Warm fires on the North Kaibab Ranger District. Treatments included reseeding, establishing erosion control, fence repair, stock tank cleanout, and eradicating noxious weeds.

Noxious Weed Treatments
The Forest completed 3,025 acres of noxious weed control through the use of herbicide, hand pulling and biological treatments. Species treated included dalmatian toadflax, bull thistle, leafy spurge, scotch thistle, musk thistle, diffuse knapweed, and cheatgrass. These treatments improve native plant composition and density, with increased ground cover and watershed protection benefits.

Mining Reclamation
Forest managers completed two sandstone mine reclamation projects totaling 14 acres. Restoration work included filling in quarry holes with stone blocks and covering the area with the available topsoil from the site. Because of the reclamation effort, erosion from the sites will be greatly reduced.

Portions of North Kaibab Designated National Natural Landmark

The Kaibab squirrel is endemic to the Kaibab Plateau, which means the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest and parts of the north rim of Grand Canyon National Park are the only places in the world to naturally host this furry critter.

In an effort to nationally recognize the Kaibab squirrel, the National Park Service designated portions of the North Kaibab Ranger District and Grand Canyon National Park as a National Natural Landmark. This designation helps to ensure the recognition and appreciation of this squirrel species and its habitat.

According to the National Natural Landmarks Program website, the area designated as a landmark comprises nearly 200,000 acres of ponderosa pine habitat, which the Kaibab squirrel depends on for survival.

Like the finches of the Galapagos, natural geographic boundaries have restricted the Kaibab squirrel's movement and allowed it to evolve into the species seen today. Not to be confused with the similar-looking Abert's squirrel, which is found on the two southern districts of the Kaibab National Forest as well as many other places in the western United States, the Kaibab squirrel has distinctive features born of its evolution on the Kaibab Plateau.



A strategy meeting for a wildfire managed to achieve resource objectives.

Sensitive Bat Species Inventory: Wildlife biologists partnered with Northern Arizona University bat researcher Dr. Carol Chambers to survey sensitive bat species on the Tusayan and North Kaibab districts. Three sensitive species were captured in mist nets – Allen's lappet-browed bat, spotted bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat – along with nine other bat species.

Sheep Capture/Disease Assessment: The Forest worked with specialists from AZGFD and the Bureau of Land Management along with volunteers to test bighorn sheep for diseases. Using two helicopters, the biologists captured the Kanab Creek desert bighorn sheep in order to determine the prevalence of disease within the population. The information will be used to guide future management initiatives including transplant efforts in the Kanab Creek drainage.

Mexican Spotted Owl Monitoring: Wildlife biologists monitored territory occupancy in each of the Forest's six Mexican spotted owl protected activity centers (PACs), all located on the Williams district. Biologists determined that five of the six PACs were occupied by spotted owls during the 2009 spotted owl breeding season.

Rare Plant Monitoring: Forest botanists have been partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Nature Conservancy, and Dr. Robert Frye to conduct long-term monitoring of the rare endemic Kaibab pincushion cactus (*Pediocactus paradinei*) on the North Kaibab district.

Quarry Reclamation Increases on Kaibab National Forest

Over the last four years, about a quarter of the flagstone quarries on the Kaibab National Forest have been reclaimed. There are now 85 quarries compared to 110 just a few years ago.

About two years ago, contractors harvested 100,000 tons of flagstone annually from the Forest. Largely due to the declining housing market, contractors have reduced flagstone exports by half. The declining market and rising reclamation bond prices have led contractors to reclaim some of their quarry sites.

According to lands and minerals specialist Steve Jenner, quarry reclamation is the first step in the process of a site moving closer to historic ecological conditions. Because of the heavy disturbance that occurred at the sites, reclamation can only accomplish so much. Typically following reclamation, grass begins to grow within a couple of years. Eventually, shrubs and trees will take root until the site begins to resemble the surrounding pinyon-juniper woodlands.

The Kaibab National Forest holds 16 quarry contracts. Each contractor harvests flagstone at one to 12 different sites, most of which are located north and east of Ash Fork. Because of Forest Service restrictions on opening new quarries and quarry acreage, contractors often reclaim unproductive sites in order to expand more productive existing sites.

Reclamation costs range from about \$2,000 to \$5,000 per acre. Every contractor provides the Forest with reclamation bonds to ensure quarries are reclaimed once harvesting at a particular site has been discontinued.

Local Teens Spend Summer on North Kaibab and Williams Districts



Youth Conservation Corps members worked with firefighters and archaeologists on a fuels reduction project on the Williams Ranger District. More than just a summer job ...

The North Kaibab and Williams districts participated in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program in 2009, hiring groups of area teenagers to perform much-needed maintenance work on the Forest. For the North Kaibab, it was the first year to participate in the program since 2001.

The North Kaibab crew consisted of eight teenagers from Fredonia and Kanab who spent seven weeks of their summer conducting trail maintenance along the Rainbow Rim Trail, removing brush, pulling weeds, and even installing erosion control devices in areas of the 2006 Warm Fire.

The eight local teens on the Williams crew completed such hands-on projects as rebuilding a fence that had burned, improving and maintaining Forest trails, fencing stands of aspen trees to protect them from grazing ungulates, and preparing areas for future prescribed burning projects.

The YCC participants, who ranged in age from 15 to 18 years old, worked under the guidance of district staff and crew leaders hired through the Coconino Rural Environment Corps (CREC). The CREC YCC program is designed to introduce high-school-aged youth to community service and resource conservation through on-the-ground project work. The program also allows teens to participate in a career field they may wish to pursue.

Kevin Larkin, North Kaibab recreation, lands and wilderness staff officer, said that in addition to the valuable work performed on the ground, the YCC program is beneficial because it provides employment to local youth while giving them valuable opportunities to get outside and experience nature.

During fiscal year 2009, the Kaibab National Forest continued its efforts to build strong, mutually-beneficial relationships with area tribes, conduct meaningful consultation with tribal governments and effective scoping of tribal communities, and conduct outreach to underserved tribal communities that represent a significant percentage of Forest users.

All three districts of the Forest successfully worked with tribal neighbors to address common issues on the ground. On the North Kaibab Ranger District, Forest officials collaborated with the Hopi Tribe to conduct a joint trip to monitor ancestral Hopi sites in Kanab Creek Wilderness. On the Tusayan Ranger District, district ranger Angela Parker worked closely with the Havasupai Tribe to accommodate

a traditional tribal gathering at their sacred site of Red Butte, while continuing to coordinate with tribal officials on uranium-related projects. Additionally, construction began on a new boundary fence between the Tusayan Ranger District and the Navajo Nation after many years of close collaboration with Navajo officials. On the Williams Ranger District, project planners worked closely with Hopi cultural advisors to plan a hazardous fuels reduction project on Bill Williams Mountain that accounts for religious concerns of Hopi traditional practitioners.

Throughout the fiscal year, Kaibab National Forest leadership worked with the Havasupai Tribe, the Hopi Tribe, the Hualapai Tribe, the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, the Navajo Nation, the Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe and the Pueblo of

TRIBAL RELATIONS





*Historic Kaibab Cabins --
A Precious Resource
Deserving Protection*

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

During fiscal year 2009, the Kaibab National Forest began implementation of two projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The Forest received \$860,000 to restore historic cabins and replace deteriorating campground facilities.

The first ARRA project is the Kaibab Historic Cabin Restoration Project, which was funded at \$300,000. Historic cabins receiving renovations are located on all three of the Forest's districts - Spring Valley Cabin on the Williams Ranger District; Hull Cabin on the Tusayan Ranger District; and,

Jump Up Cabin, as well as cabins at Big Springs and Dry Park, on the North Kaibab Ranger District. Work includes restoration of historic interiors, stone foundation repair, exterior staining, roof repair and wood stove replacement.

"We are especially excited about the work we are going to be able to accomplish at Hull Cabin," said Mike Lyndon, Forest tribal liaison and an archaeologist. "Once renovations are completed, we hope to add Hull Cabin to the Arizona Cabin Rental Program, which means it will be another recreation opportunity on the Forest for people to experience and enjoy." Hull Cabin is the oldest surviving cabin near the Grand Canyon. It was the home of William Hull, a sheep rancher and

entrepreneur tourist guide for the Grand Canyon from the mid-1880s to the 1890s.

The second ARRA project is the Kaibab Campground Facility Replacement Project, which was funded at \$560,000. The project allows for the replacement of deteriorating facilities at White Horse Lake Campground on the Williams Ranger District and Ten-X Campground on the Tusayan Ranger District. It also provides for construction of a new facility at Kaibab Lake Campground on the Williams Ranger District. The replacement project eliminates backlog maintenance at the campgrounds and provides Forest visitors with new facilities that are accessible to all people.

Rural Communities Fuels Management Partnership

The Rural Communities Fuels Management Partnership (RCFMP) continued its work in 2009 reducing hazardous fuels on private property in the wildland urban interface. Accomplishments include 175 acres of thinning and 135 acres of slash piles ready to burn.

One of the goals of the RCFMP is complementing fuels reduction treatments occurring on adjacent National Forest or State Trust lands. One project was initiated in 2009 on the Tusayan Ranger District to help achieve this goal.

During the fall, fire personnel from the Tusayan Ranger District assisted their neighbors with the Tusayan Fire Department burning slash piles on private property west of Tusayan. Broadcast burning will eventually occur throughout the project area when conditions are appropriate.

The Wolf Project was funded by a grant through the RCFMP. This 160-acre project was implemented in conjunction with other projects within the Tusayan fire district to reduce hazardous fuels near Tusayan. Importantly, it lies adjacent to the 1,375-acre ongoing Long Jim project on the Tusayan Ranger District. These complementary projects show true cooperation between the Tusayan Ranger District and the Tusayan Fire Department to create effective fire breaks around Tusayan, thereby protecting the community from severe fire occurrence.

The North Kaibab is an amazing place where you can camp in a statuesque forest at 8,000 feet elevation along the north rim of the Grand Canyon one day, and then sleep outdoors on the slick rock esplanade above Kanab Creek, surrounded by beautiful rock formations and cool prehistoric rock art, the next. Or you can sit at the end of a ridge overlooking Houserock Valley, just listening to the sounds and watching the shadows change across the valley.

*Connie Reid
Archaeologist, North Kaibab Ranger District*

Zuni, and the Bodaway/Gap, Cameron, Coalmine, Coppermine, Lechee, Leupp, and To' Nanees' Dizi' chapters of the Western Navajo Agency of the Navajo Nation regarding more than 45 projects and issues. The Forest also hosted the third annual Intertribal Meeting in Williams in order to update tribes on Forest projects and address issues of mutual interest and concern.

During fiscal year 2009, the Kaibab National Forest continued to prove its long-standing commitment to conducting meaningful government-to-government consultation with its tribal neighbors by building strong partnerships that stress collaborative planning and a shared stewardship approach to the management of public lands.



Silviculture

Silviculture is the art and science of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, health and quality of forests to meet diverse needs and values. During fiscal year 2009, Kaibab National Forest silviculturists completed or exceeded all targets in improving and establishing forest vegetation. Specifically, 2,909 acres were thinned for important goals such as improving the health of the remaining tree stand, reducing fire hazard, and enhancing wildlife habitat.

About 87 percent of those 2,909 acres were thinned through contracts with businesses, which put needed dollars into local communities.

FUELS MANAGEMENT



Restoring fire-adapted ecosystems remains one of the Forest's highest priorities. In 2009, fire managers used their Hazardous Fuels Reduction budget to reduce fire hazard on 13,874 acres of Kaibab National Forest lands. Fuels treatments included broadcast burning, thinning, piling, and pile burning. Most of these acres were treated with broadcast burns lit under prescribed conditions to produce low to moderate intensity fires that remove accumulations of forest litter and debris. It remains the most cost effective and immediate fire hazard reduction treatment available to fire managers. In 2009, 10,393 acres were treated with broadcast burns. Just under half these acres – 6,274 – occurred within the wildland urban interface (WUI) where the forest and communities meet. Most urban interface treatments were on the Williams Ranger District where there is the highest density of private in-holdings and municipal lands, though 800 acres around the community of Tusayan on the Tusayan Ranger District also received prescribed burn treatment. In addition to broadcast burning, Kaibab Hazardous Fuels Reduction funding was also used to thin 378 acres, to pile 1,790 acres of slash, and to burn 378 acres of slash piles. Thinning, and piling slash in dense stands of timber, while considerably more costly than burning, has a longer term effect on reducing fire hazard. The majority of these treatments took place in the WUI where the higher cost of these treatments is easily justified to protect residences and improvements on private lands, as well as watersheds and infrastructure that are located on forest lands. Kaibab fire managers continue to use lightning-caused wildfires to return fire to a fire-adapted ecosystem and accomplish hazardous fuel reduction objectives when weather and forest fuel moisture conditions are appropriate. These naturally-caused fires have other resource benefits as well such as improving and protecting wildlife habitat, recycling nutrients into the soil, improving forage production, and maintaining or improving stand structure. These fires typically burn at low to moderate intensity, with isolated pockets of moderate to intense fire behavior. Not simply allowed to burn, these fires are actively managed; specialists from all forest resource disciplines participate in the decision process to determine where the fires will be allowed to spread, what values are at risk, and how they will be protected. Fire managers and firefighters implement those plans, often over the course of several weeks. In fiscal year 2009, 12 fires on the Kaibab were managed to achieve resource objectives, burning a total of 44,568 acres. On the Williams Ranger District were the Wild Horse Fire – 11,587 acres, the Marteen Fire – 10,288 acres, and the Cross Fire – 7,718 acres. The Tusayan Ranger District managed five wildfires for resource benefit objectives including the Ruby Fire – 4,102 acres, the Miller Fire – 3,160 acres, the Indian-Rae Fire – 2,005 acres, the Anderson Fire – 1,238 acres, and the Rain Fire – 40 acres. The North Kaibab Ranger District managed the Fracas Fire – 2,339 acres, the Pipeline Fire – 1,441 acres, the Castle Fire – 432 acres, and the Dee Fire – 213 acres – to achieve resource objectives. Between the 13,874 acres treated using funds allocated to the Forest for hazardous fuels reduction, and the 44,568 acres of wildfires managed to achieve resource objectives, a total of 58,442 acres, primarily in the ponderosa pine type, were treated in the 2009 fiscal year. This equates to approximately 10 percent of the pine type on the Forest, an unprecedented rate of treatment.

Timber Sales

The timber industry was severely impacted by the economic downturn. Declining demand for wood products drove lumber and wood product prices down, often below the cost of extracting and processing purchased saw timber.

However, a few commercial timber projects continue to take place on the Kaibab, aiding in fuels reduction, forest health, wildlife habitat enhancement, and watershed improvement efforts.

On the North Kaibab, the Fracas Timber Sale was completed as part of the 1,200-acre Fracas Wildlife Habitat Improvement Project. Commercial thinning occurred on 675 acres of the project area with the wood going to

the Fredonia mill. Also on the North Kaibab, the FR641U_225 Hazard Tree Salvage Timber Sale was completed. The effort involved removing dead, hazardous trees that had burned during the Warm Fire along forest roads 641U and 225.

On the Williams Ranger District, the Pineaire Timber Sale was implemented, which allowed for the treatment of 177 acres within the community of Parks in order to lessen the risk of wildland fire. All told on the Williams and Tusayan districts in fiscal year 2009, logging authorized through prior year contracts resulted in the treatment of about 1,300 acres and provided 8,327 CCF (around four million board feet) of commercial wood products.

Timber Products Used by Local Families



8,821 Cords

Personal Use Firewood



2,146

Christmas Tree Permits

Permits were also available for fence posts, pines poles, decorative wood, wilding transplants, and pine cones.

FIRE MANAGEMENT



*The Ruby and Game Reserve fires.
Taken from Red Butte Lookout on
the Tusayan Ranger District.*

During 2009, the Kaibab National Forest advanced interagency fire management practices by managing fire across jurisdictional boundaries with our neighbors at Grand Canyon National Park and the Coconino National Forest. Over the course of several months, fire officials jointly managed fire on more than 17,000 acres between the Ruby Complex and the Wild Horse Complex. These fires provided excellent opportunities to work together to accomplish shared fire management objectives.

In late May, the Ruby Fire began on the Tusayan Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest about seven miles southeast of Tusayan, and the Game Reserve Fire began on the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park approximately nine miles southeast of Grand Canyon Village. The fires were lightning-caused and located about four miles apart from each other. Managers in the Park and on the Forest identified common goals and multiple objectives that they hoped to achieve as the fires moved across the landscape toward each other.

On June 13, agency administrators decided to manage both fires under one organization, called the Ruby Complex. This was the first time fire had been managed jointly between the South Rim of the Park and the Tusayan Ranger District.

Management objectives for the complex included protecting a major power line and the Arizona Trail, preserving sensitive cultural sites, improving wildlife habitat, and returning fire to a fire-adapted ecosystem. Management of the incident provided many training and learning opportunities.

Then, in late July, another opportunity arose to manage fire across jurisdictional boundaries when the Red Fire started on the Coconino National Forest and the Wild Horse Fire started on the Kaibab National Forest about 16 miles northeast of Williams. Officials of both forests decided to combine resources and manage the fires under one organization as the Wild Horse Complex. Management objectives included reducing hazardous fuel accumulation, returning fire to a fire-adapted ecosystem, protecting range improvements, and improving wildlife habitat.

These incidents were examples of how fire can be managed safely and effectively across jurisdictional boundaries to meet protection and resource objectives. Kaibab National Forest fire managers look forward to future opportunities to manage fire across the landscape in cooperation with our neighboring agencies.



My favorite place on the Kaibab is the Red Butte Lookout. It provides a tremendous vantage point over the Tusayan district and the surrounding areas, including parts of the Williams district and Coconino National Forest, parts of the Grand Canyon National Park, as well as state and private lands.

— Gary Bishop
Fire Management Officer
Tusayan Ranger District

Wildland Fire Advisory Council

Each year, the Kaibab National Forest joins other members of the Wildland Fire Advisory Council (WFAC) in training exercises to improve efficiency and teamwork in responding to emergencies. In 2009, about 100 participants spent May 16 practicing wildland firefighting techniques and testing equipment to be prepared before incidents occur. This training complemented another preparedness drill March 28 involving a simulated airplane crash that developed into a wildfire and threatened private property.

The May 2009 exercise involved three training scenarios. The simulations, which were all held in Williams, were 1) a structure assessment drill at the south end of 9th, 10th, and 11th streets, 2) a wildland fire exercise on the south end of Buckskinner Park, and 3) apparatus capabilities and compatibilities at the Kaibab National Forest Supervisor's Office.

One new component to the training was testing the "Ready Coconino" emergency notification system through Coconino County Emergency Management. Early

Saturday morning the system was initiated, and residents on the south side of Williams were notified of the training exercise.

Participants included Camp Navajo Fire Department, Coconino County, Flagstaff Fire Department, High Country Fire Department, Junipine Fire Department, Kaibab National Forest, Ponderosa Fire Department, Red Lake Fire Department, Sherwood Fire Department, Williams Fire Department, and Tusayan Fire Department.

BUDGET FY2009



100%
TOTAL BUDGET
\$18,671,106



21%
FIRE PREPAREDNESS
\$3,856,429



11%
ADMINISTRATION
\$1,969,033



2%
RANGE
\$290,526



12%
TIMBER
\$2,219,159



6%
OTHER
\$1,166,960



6%
VEGETATIVE TREATMENT
\$1,065,000



11%
FUELS
\$2,011,756



6%
RECREATION
\$1,158,400



3%
FACILITY MAINTENANCE
\$593,778



7%
ROAD MAINTENANCE
\$1,264,200



2%
WILDLIFE
\$375,000



4%
LANDS & MINERALS
\$687,000



5%
AMERICAN RECOVERY
AND REINVESTMENT ACT
\$860,000



5%
FOREST PLANNING
\$924,500

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