

## **Public Scoping and Opportunity to Comment Cliffhanger Stream Habitat Improvement Project**

Red Rock Ranger District  
Coconino National Forest  
Yavapai County, Arizona

The Coconino National Forest, Red Rock Ranger District, is preparing analysis for a stream habitat improvement project along Forest Road 9845N, commonly called Cliffhanger. This proposal falls under the Categorical Exclusion for wildlife habitat restoration: *Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than 1 mile of low standard road construction* [36 CFR 220.6 d (6)]. “Categorical exclusion” means a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the environment and therefore neither an Environmental Assessment nor an Environmental Impact Statement is required.

### **Description of the Proposed Action**

The section of FR9845N shown in red, beyond the location marked with an “X” on the attached map, was not designated for motor vehicle use in the September 2011 Coconino National Forest Travel Management decision. The District subsequently decided to place boulders at this location to provide a physical barrier to motorized traffic beyond this point (Decision Memo, Reissuance of Outfitter/Guide Permits, December 2010). While these actions provided for the road closure, they did not address the restoration activities required to rehabilitate the riparian habitat beyond the closure point.

The District proposes to narrow the road bed beyond the closure point, which would continue to provide nonmotorized access to the creek. The edges of the road bed would be recontoured and the drainage reconstructed so as to avoid concentrated sediment flows into Oak Creek. Seeding with native plants would further reduce the width of the old roadbed and reduce erosion.

### **Opportunity to Comment under 36 CFR 215**

This comment period is being provided pursuant to the March 19, 2012, order issued by the U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of California in the case *Sequoia Forestkeeper, et al. vs. Thomas Tidwell*. Only those who provide timely comments under this comment period will be eligible to appeal the decision pursuant to 36 CFR part 215 regulations.

The purpose of this comment period is to allow the public early and meaningful participation on a proposed action prior to a decision being made by the Responsible Official. We are combining our scoping effort required by FSH 1909.15 and the Notice and Comment requirement required by 36 CFR 215 with this letter.

## **How to Comment and Timeframe**

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of a legal notice in the Red Rock News. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period.

Submit written comments to: Heather Provencio, District Ranger, P.O. Box 20429, Sedona, AZ 86341, or fax to 928-203-7539. The office business hours for hand-delivered comments are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Mon-Fri, excluding holidays.

Submit electronic comments in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to [comments-southwestern-coconino-redrock@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southwestern-coconino-redrock@fs.fed.us).

Oral comments may be provided to Julie Rowe, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, at 928-203-2915.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215.

## **Appeal Eligibility**

It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Only those who provide substantive comments during this comment period are eligible to appeal the decision under the regulations. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 215.6.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

# MAP OF PROJECT AREA

Red indicates roads not designated for motor vehicle use under TMR. Green shows roads designated for motorized use. X marks the closure point.

