

COCONINO
National Forest
2012



Stakeholders
Report

2012... A YEAR OF CHALLENGE

Each year brings with it many challenges and work to be accomplished across the Coconino National Forest, and last year was no exception.

From our partner agencies and volunteers to our stakeholders and employees, the hundreds of thousands of hours of work might be measured by millions of dollars, but the lasting effects upon the land and people are priceless.

This report is comprised of just a few of our accomplishments, but we hope it will give you a snapshot of the wonderful work our employees are engaged in and how busy they truly are in caring for the land and serving people.

We think this report also reflects the incredible collaboration between organizations, agencies and people—as that is what it takes to move projects forward to completion.

From all of us at Coconino National Forest, we would like to thank you for your continued support in caring for this land and serving people.

We are proud of what we have been able to accomplish with the help of city, county, state and federal partners as well as volunteers.

We look forward to a new year of challenges and work which allow us to connect with you, our stakeholders.

For more information and ongoing updates on forest projects and activities, visit us online at www.fs.usda.gov/coconino.



M. EARL STEWART
Forest Supervisor

M. Earl Stewart



SCOTT RUSSELL
Dep. Forest Supervisor

Scott Russell

PARTNERS IN PROGRAMS

VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT FOREST PROGRAMS

Numerous programs across the Forest were largely supported by volunteers this year and their extra hands assisted the Districts with accomplishing goals.

Equally as important, however, the various volunteer efforts and events throughout the year provide opportunities for persons of all ages to get involved on public lands.

They were able to experience all the hard work involved in caring for the forest, and to appreciate the beauty and value of the outdoors.

In 2012, volunteers contributed almost 82,000 hours of work across the three districts of the Coconino National Forest.

- Volunteer activities included:
- Leading interpretive programs such as campground talks & educational hikes
 - Building aspen protection fences
 - Tree planting events in the Schultz Burn Area
 - Graffiti and litter cleanup projects
 - Trail maintenance and construction efforts
 - Administrative assistance and visitor services
 - Constructing and installing forest service signs
 - Conducting wildlife surveys
 - Building fences for grazing allotments

Coconino National Forest employees look forward to continuing to work with enthusiastic volunteers on a wealth of projects in 2013. For additional information on getting involved call one of the Ranger Stations and ask for the Volunteer Coordinator.



Volunteers gather to help replant trees in the Schultz Burn Area. Photo by Curt Knight

FOREST RESTORATION ACROSS FOUR NATIONAL FORESTS

The number of trees on National Forests in northern Arizona is highly departed from a natural state, having grown thick and now affecting forest health and increasing the potential for uncharacteristically large wildfires. The Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) is a collaborative effort to restore 2.4 million acres of ponderosa pine forest ecosystems on portions of four northern Arizona National Forests, which include the Coconino, Kaibab, Tonto and Apache-Sitgreaves.

Significant milestones were reached in 2012, including the Forest Service awarding Pioneer and Associates LLC with a stewardship contract for 10 years and 300,000 acres—the largest stewardship contract ever issued in Forest Service history. The first planning effort will analyze nearly one million acres and is projected to be completed in 2013.

As well, Pioneer and Associates plans to begin receiving logs at its Winslow, Arizona mill during 2013.

As new industry begins implementation, accomplishments and on-the-ground work will increase substantially and reach full implementation in fiscal year 2015.

The objectives of 4FRI include:

- Treat an additional 30,000 acres per year for 20 years.
- Allow for increased use of prescribed fire and wildfire.
- Engage industry so the cost of restoration is covered by the value of the products removed.
- Assure that science based and socially acceptable agreements result in long-term landscape scale restoration and resilience.

Individuals and organizations interested in 4FRI may join the 4FRI Stakeholder Group or work directly with members of the Forest Service 4FRI Team by contacting the Coconino National Forest Supervisor's Office at (928) 527-3600.

CABIN RESTORATION



Engineers from the Coconino National Forest gathered in September of 2012 to celebrate the completed renovation of the Fire Tower Lookout's cabin at Baker Butte in the Mogollon Rim Ranger District. The cabin was previously run down, full of rat droppings and trash, and the building itself was out of square with uneven floors.

From Left: Forest Supervisor Earl Stewart, engineers Daisy Welch, Alan Walls, Darryl McComas, Steve Blythe, and the Mogollon Rim District Ranger Brian Dykstra stand in front of the newly renovated cabin at Baker Butte.



A volunteer holds a sapling and takes a well-deserved break while helping replant trees in the Schultz Burn Area. Photo by Curt Knight

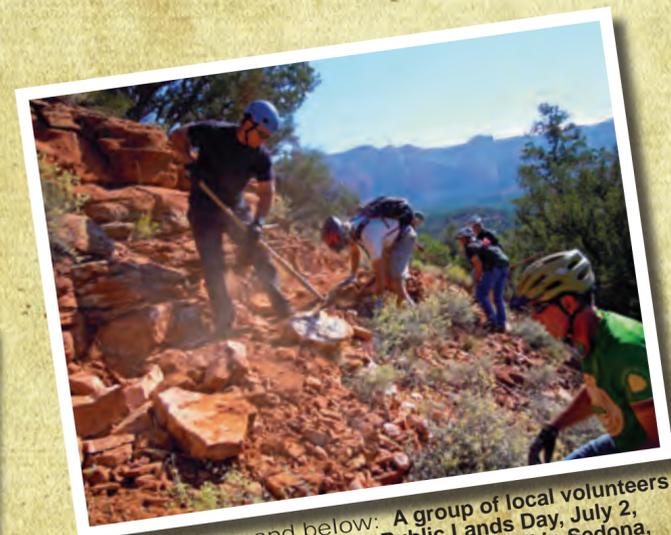


Photo above and below: A group of local volunteers come together on National Public Lands Day, July 2, 2012, to naturalize an illegally created trail in Sedona, restoring it to its natural setting.

FORCE MULTIPLIER...

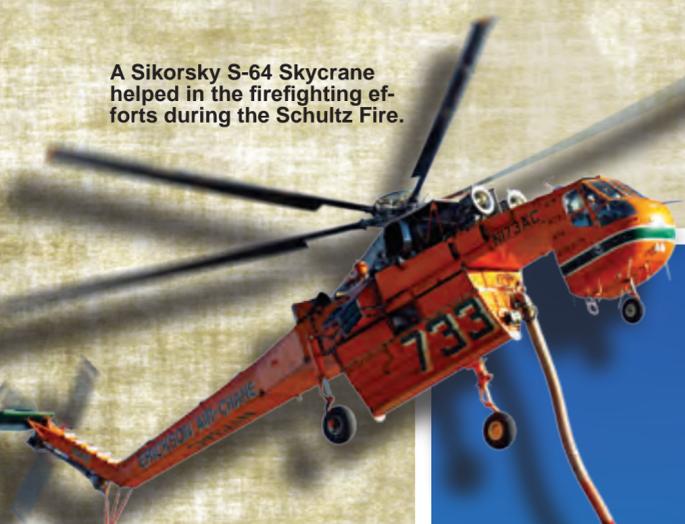
VOLUNTEERS NEARLY TOPPED 23,000 HOURS IN THE FLAGSTAFF RANGER DISTRICT AND THE RED ROCK RANGER DISTRICT CAME IN SHY OF 59,000 HOURS. ALL OF THESE HOURS OF WORK AMOUNT TO NEARLY \$1.8 MILLION!

MANY PROJECTS WOULD NEVER BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT THE HELP OF OUR VOLUNTEERS!



A Sikorsky S-64 Skycrane helped in the firefighting efforts during the Schultz Fire.

HEALING SCHULTZ BURN AREA



ABOVE: The Schultz Fire began at approximately 11 a.m. on June 20, 2012 and burned more than 15,000 acres. **BELOW:** One month later during monsoon, floods threatened lives and homes below the Schultz area that burned.

Coconino employees continue to work diligently on Schultz Fire recovery, not only on an extensive list of on-the-ground projects, but also with hours of work not as visible to the public eye such as creation and oversight of contracts and special use permits, and environmental surveys and analyses.

When the Schultz Fire began June 20, 2010, the Coconino NF immediately assembled a Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team to assess the impacts of the fire and determine appropriate mitigation measures.

In total, five phases of BAER treatments were implemented. Efforts included: Aerial mulching on over 3,000 acres; Using 98 acres of hazard trees removed from the burn area to create 2,000 tons of wood mulch onsite; Aerial seeding on 5600 acres; Armoring drainage crossings and removing berms on Waterline Road; Removing culverts along Schultz Pass Road; Constructing waterbars on approx. 23 miles of roads; Removing log jams in multiple drainages; and Constructing/maintaining drainage canals (including Copeland Canal), sediment basins, 89 acres of scarification zones, and 10 berms five miles in length in partnership with Coconino County, the Natural Resources Conservation Services, and Arizona Department of Transportation.

LONG TERM TREATMENTS

The long term restoration efforts, accomplished recently, include:

- Reconstructing Lockett Meadow Road and fully realigning Forest Road 776
- Installing/maintaining warning and interpretive signs
- Continuing hazard tree removal from roads and system trails
- Restoring the Bonito Campground amphitheater
- Restoring Weatherford, Little Elden, and Little Bear trails through several volunteer events
- Treating noxious weeds, and monitoring native plants and regrowth
- Restoring wildlife habitat and reconstructing range fences
- Jackstrawing 126 acres by felling trees loosely on top of each other to create obstacles around aspen seedlings and deter browsing animals. In 2013, crews anticipate jackstrawing another 136 acres.
- Replanting 1,000 acres of seedlings grown from seeds collected on the Coconino NF using volunteers and contractors. An additional 2,000 acres



are slated to be replanted.

- Completing Schultz Sediment Reduction Project Environmental Analysis

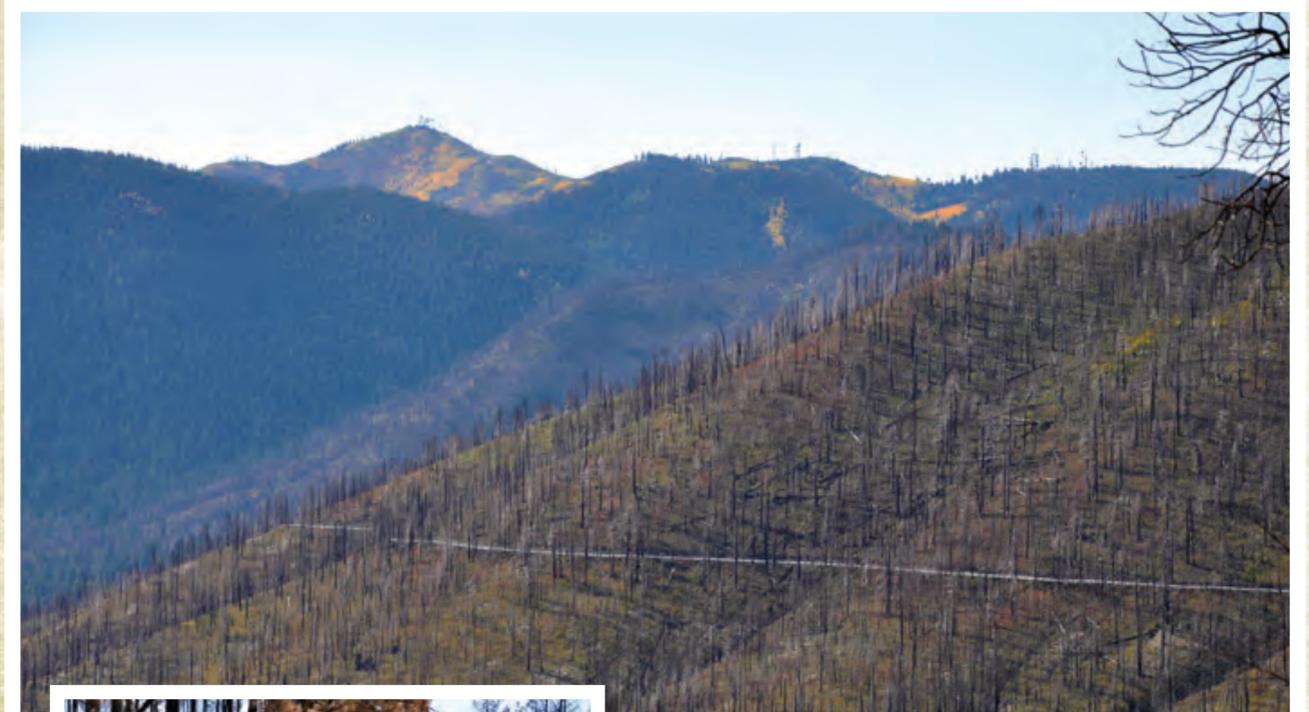
In March 2012 the Forest began the analysis process for this project in response to a proposal from Coconino County to channel water runoff through private lands and arrest sediment before leaving the National Forest. The project team completed the entire analysis in only three months.

Coconino County and their contractors will begin work on National Forest land once efforts have also begun on private lands. Modifying drainages above the neighborhood could cause more damage if connective infrastructure downstream isn't also in place to safely divert floodwaters and sediment through the private lands.

Coconino National Forest also successfully collaborated with the City of Flagstaff on the Waterline Road and Pipeline Reconstruction Project resulting in quick and efficient repair of the pipeline and the road, while minimizing impact to natural resources and the Kachina Peaks Wilderness.

Waterline Road remains closed to the public for safety purposes, but Forest managers will reevaluate conditions in the spring of 2013.

Forest understory within the Schultz burn perimeter is showing promising signs of natural regrowth and is responding positively to the already implemented treatments. For more information on the Schultz Fire and various restoration efforts, visit the Coconino National Forest public website.



ABOVE: Countless dead standing trees surround and often fall across the newly reconstructed Waterline Road.

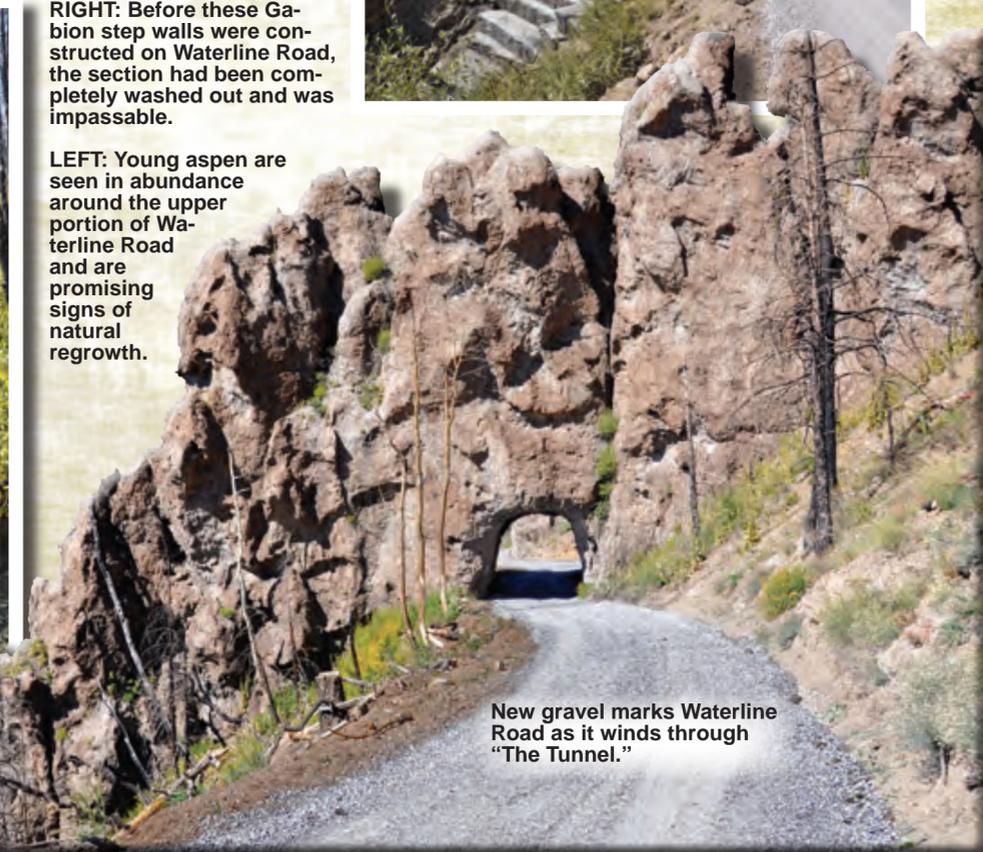
LEFT: Taken only two weeks after the fire, this photo shows how quickly the ground began to rebound after mulch treatments.



RIGHT: Before these Gabion step walls were constructed on Waterline Road, the section had been completely washed out and was impassable.



LEFT: Young aspen are seen in abundance around the upper portion of Waterline Road and are promising signs of natural regrowth.



New gravel marks Waterline Road as it winds through "The Tunnel."

FOSSIL CREEK

NATIVE FISH RESTORATION



In 2004, as part of a cooperative effort between the Forest Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Arizona Game and Fish Department, a fish barrier was installed and 9.5 miles of Fossil Creek was restored for native fish and other aquatic species.

This project is to date, the most significant restoration project for warm-water native fish in the Southwest, and perhaps, the nation.

During the winter of 2009-2010 an unusually large flood deposited a group of boulders, cobbles, and other sediments on the downstream side of the fish barrier; this deposited sediment reduced the effective drop of the fish barrier allowing non-native fish to swim above the barrier.

In March 2012 a specialized wilderness crew from Montana spent 9 days using only primitive tools to move 80 cubic tons of the flood-deposited sediment.

Volunteers used pack horses to help haul in about a thousand pounds of equipment as an alternate to using a helicopter in a Wilderness Area.

Then in September as part of a cooperative effort once again, native fish were salvaged and placed upstream while the downstream reaches were treated with rotenone to remove the non-native fish allowing for native fish communities to re-establish themselves. Native fish include the Roundtail chub, Longfin dace, Gila topminnow, Loach minnow, Spikedace, and Razorback sucker—an endangered species.



BEFORE & AFTER: A wilderness crew works to clear boulders and sediment that were deposited by a flood during the winter of 2009-2010.



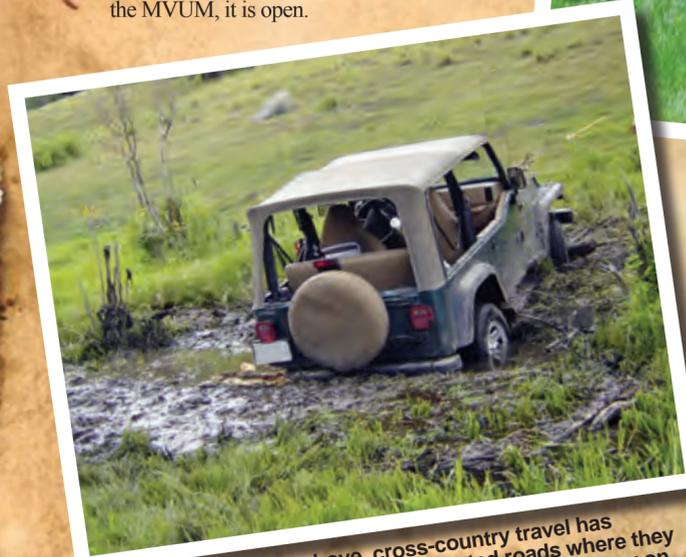
MANAGING TRAVEL

STAYING ON TRACK

Cross-country travel in a vehicle is a practice that has led to destruction of sensitive riparian and watershed areas while creating new paths and roads scattered across the forest.

In May 2012, the Coconino National Forest implemented a national policy called the Travel Management Rule (TMR). This rule designates a system of roads in the forest that are open to motorized travel, closes others and prohibits motorized cross-country travel.

Designated open roads are found on the Motorized Vehicle Use Map (MVUM), which is free at any Ranger Station. Simply put, if you are in the forest and you come upon a road that is signed but does not appear on the MVUM, that road is closed. If it appears on the MVUM, it is open.



As seen in the photos above, cross-country travel has destroyed sensitive meadows and created roads where they should never have been. Motorized vehicles should stay on open roads only that appear on the Motorized Vehicle Use Map.

There are some conditions which allow cross-country travel in a motorized vehicle, such as when you have a firewood permit and are picking up the firewood, but check with your Ranger Station for exact details.

In the meantime, please stay on open roads with your vehicle and help us protect and preserve this national forest for many future generations.

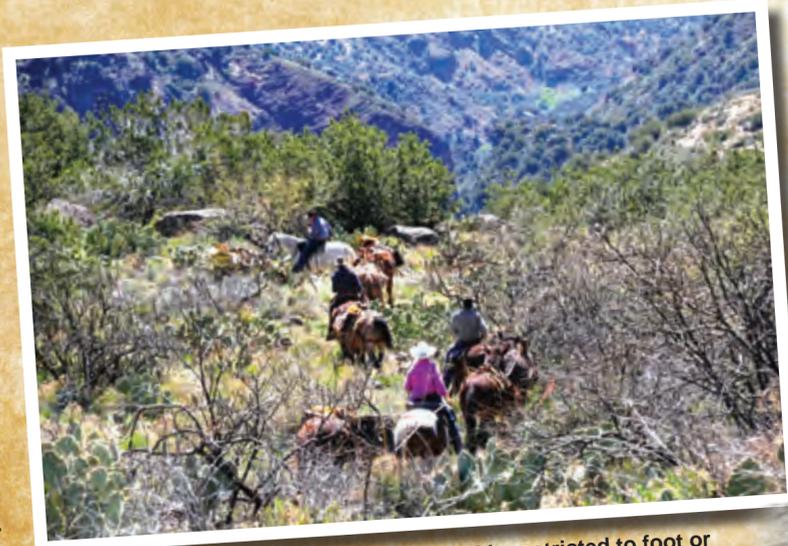
Scan the QR code to see how to get the MVUM on your smartphone, tablet or Garmin!



IT'S A HARD DAY'S WORK...

...when you work in the wilderness.

Only non-motorized tools are allowed to be used in a Wilderness Area, so crews used primitive means to remove large boulders and sediment.

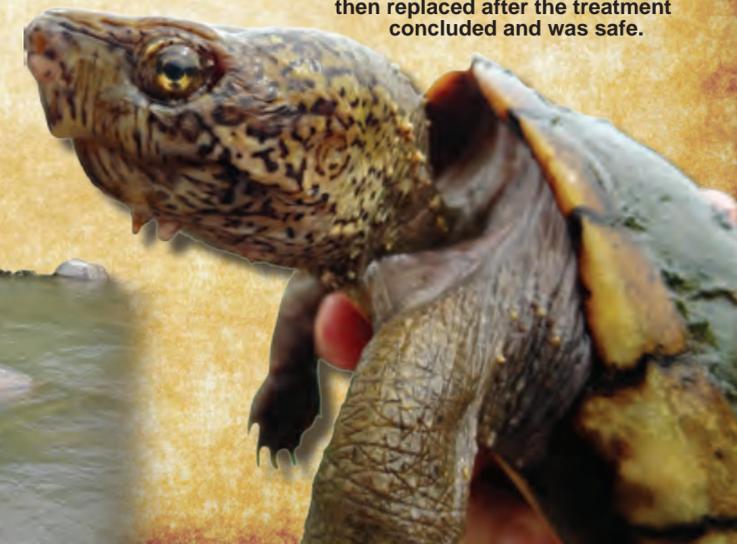


Wilderness areas are unique in that travel is restricted to foot or horseback; nothing motorized or mechanized is allowed. Shelters, picnic tables, toilet facilities and other conveniences are nowhere to be found in a Wilderness Area, so self-sufficiency is a must. This wilderness crew had to pack in all the primitive equipment they used and then pack it out.

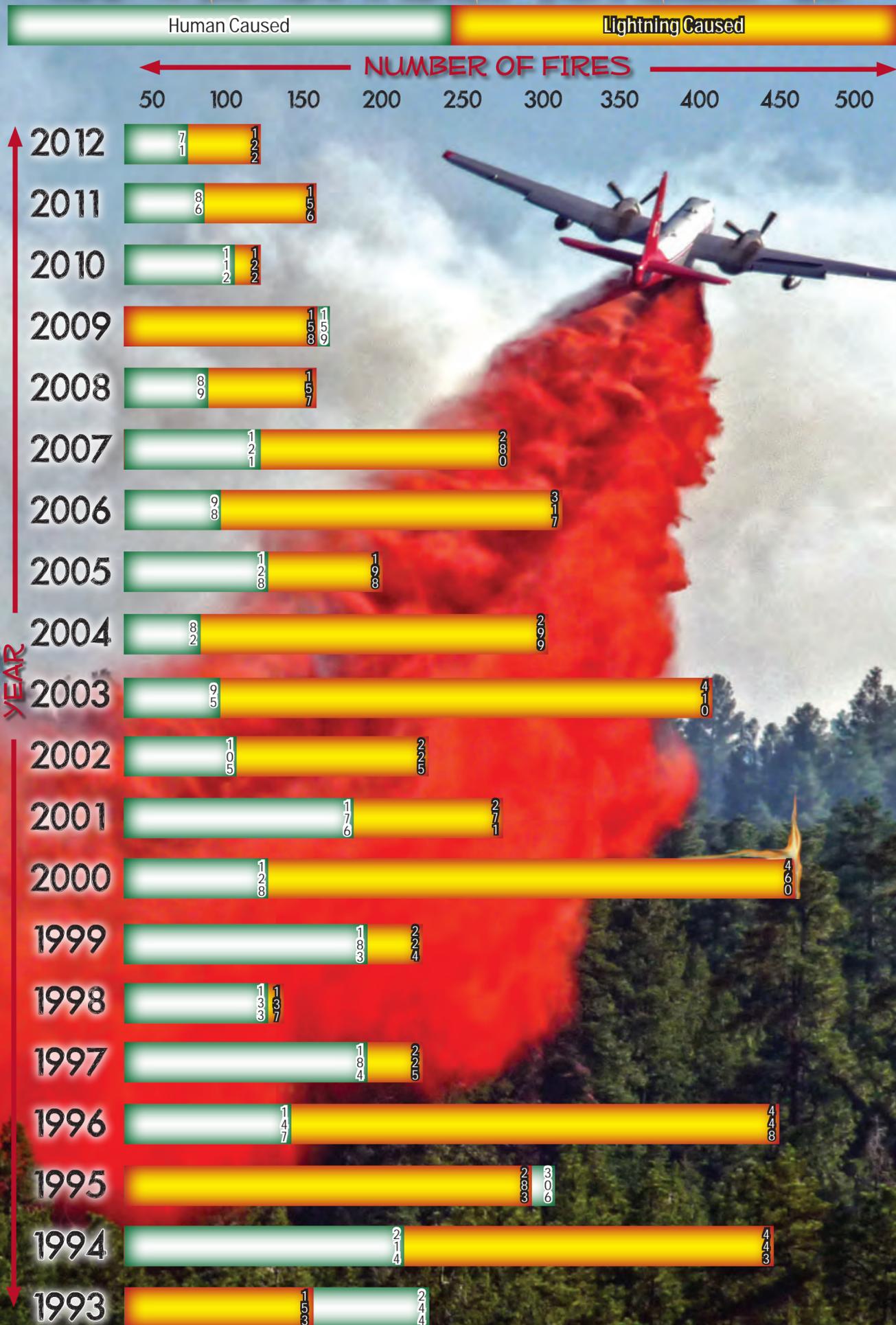
HURDLES AND TURTLES...

One of the many hurdles the crew overcame in restoring Fossil Creek was to salvage native species prior to treating the creek with Rotenone to remove non-native fish.

This turtle was caught using water hoop traps and then replaced after the treatment concluded and was safe.



20-YEAR FIRE TIMELINE



CREATING ACCESSIBILITY

The Red Rock Ranger District received the Chief's Facility Accessibility Accomplishment Award in 2012 for creating an accessible trail to the V Bar V rock art site near Wet Beaver Creek.

The district worked with the National Accessibility Program Manager in Washington on several projects, including the one for which they received this award.

The V Bar V site sometimes gets more than 200 visitors a day, so the path is used frequently. The original path down from the parking lot to the Visitor Center was an old service road which had non-accessible slope and gravel, making it almost impossible for wheelchairs to access it.

Working with the Coconino Rural Environmental Corps, the district was able to install a fully accessible trail with appropriate slopes, pull offs, and a compacted decomposed granite as the surfacing.



Members of the Coconino Rural Environmental Corps work on creating a wheelchair-accessible path to the V Bar V rock art site.



DID YOU KNOW...
 MOST OF THE STAFFING AT PALATKI AND V BAR V ARE PROVIDED THROUGH A COMBINATION OF FULL-TIME VOLUNTEERS WHO LIVE ON-SITE, LOCAL FRIENDS OF THE FOREST, MEMBERS OF THE VERDE VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND FOREST SERVICE PERSONNEL.

WATERSHED PROTECTION

PARTNERING WITH FLAGSTAFF

In November 2012, voters approved a \$10 million bond to support critical forest restoration efforts on the Coconino National Forest and State of Arizona lands to protect vital watersheds to Flagstaff.

In collaboration with the City of Flagstaff, the Coconino National Forest is developing the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project to address forest restoration efforts in the Rio de Flag watershed and Lake Mary watershed.

Rio de Flag is located in the Dry Lake Hills area immediately north of Flagstaff and the headwaters of the Lake Mary watershed are located approximately 30 miles south.

The risks of wildfire and post-fire flooding cannot be completely eliminated; the goal of this project is to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire and potentially catastrophic flooding that would directly impact downtown Flagstaff or the city's water supply in Lake Mary.

On-the-ground work is expected to begin in 2013 and continue for several years afterwards.



Thick, overgrown trees as seen from Forest Road 557 (Elden Lookout Road) looking down within one of the project areas south of the San Francisco Peaks.

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Photos of Coconino National Forest are online at www.flickr.com/photos/coconinonationalforest.

For more information on Coconino National Forest, visit us online at www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino.

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