United States Department of Agriculture

# Errata for the Cragin Watershed Protection Project Final Environmental Assessment

## Coconino National Forest, Mogollon Rim Ranger District
## Coconino County, Arizona

Forest Service Southwestern Region Updated July 2018

# Summary

This document addresses errors identified in the Cragin Watershed Protection Project Final Environmental Assessment (EA). The errors identified in the EA are not substantive, and this errata is expected to provide clarification for future reference.

# Errata

## Correction: Summarization of crown fire potential for the existing condition in Chapter 1 of the EA

Page 19 of the Final Environmental Assessment, which includes a summary of the existing condition, states, “Over 90% over the project area would demonstrate some form of crown fire under 97% percentile weather. About 76% of the forested area has the potential for **active crown fire** where the entire tree canopy is lost to fire. About 18% of the area has the potential for **passive crown fire** in which individual or small groups of trees torch out, but solid flaming in the canopy is not likely to be maintained except for short periods. The remaining 6% of the forested area has the potential for a **surface fire** only.”

This information is from the Preliminary Environmental Assessment. In the Final Environmental Assessment, Table 3 on page 22, and information on page 134 includes the correct information based on updated fire and fuels modeling results. The statement above should be corrected to read:

“Over 50% of the project area would demonstrate some form of crown fire under 97% percentile weather. About 17% of the forested area has the potential for **active crown fire** where the entire tree canopy is lost to fire. About 36% of the area has the potential for **passive crown fire** in which individual or small groups of trees torch out, but solid flaming in the canopy is not likely to be maintained except for short periods. The remaining 47% of the forested area has the potential for a **surface fire** only.”

This is not considered a substantive change since the accurate information was included and disclosed in the effects analysis.

## Correction: Design feature W7 on page 422 of the Final Environmental Assessment

During the objection process, concerns were expressed that design feature W7, as written, could be misinterpreted to mean that trees larger than 18-inches dbh could be cut to enhance large oak trees, which is one of the desired conditions written into the large tree implementation plan (Appendix A, pp. 412-414). This was not the intent, and as a result the language of design feature W7 is corrected here to clarify that large tree greater than 18 inches are not to be cut in Mexican spotted owl habitat for the intent of enhancing large oaks according to the desired conditions identified in the large tree retention policy.

<u>As it is currently written on p. 422 of the CWPP Final EA</u>: W7 - In MSO recovery habitat, manage for large oaks by removing conifers up to 18 inches dbh that do not meet the “old tree” definition within 30 feet of oak 10 inches diameter at root collar or larger. Trees larger than 18

inches may be removed to manage for large oaks in conformance with the old and large tree implementation plan.

Corrected version of design feature W7: In MSO recovery habitat, manage for large oaks by removing conifers up to 18 inches dbh that do not meet the “old tree” definition within 30 feet of oak 10 inches diameter at root collar or larger. Refer to Table X in the large tree implementation plan in the Final Decision Notice.

This is not considered a substantive change. Both statements refer to the large tree implementation plan, which is the document with direction for when large trees >18 inches dbh can be removed. The version in the Final Environmental Assessment was identified as a concern because it was thought it could lead to a different interpretation. It is the Forest Service intent not to change the meaning of the language in W7, but to clarify the statement for interpretation purposes.

## Correction: The 2014 East Clear Creek Task Order, which was descoped

In July 2017, the 2014 East Clear Creek Task Order (2,318 acres, approximately 1,400 acres of which overlaps the project area) was descoped, or cancelled. As a result the acres identified in the task order have not been treated in 2017 or 2018 as expected.

The East Clear Creek Task Order was discussed in the Environmental Assessment as a cumulative action on pages 10, 99, 145, 174, 313, and 334. This is not considered a substantive change because even though the 2014 task order was cancelled, the same acreage will be included in a new contract or agreement for treatment through implementation of the Cragin Watershed Protection Project or the Rim Country Four Forest Restoration Initiative Project.

## Correction: Mention of the Proposed Forest Plan Amendment 2 in the Final Environmental Assessment

On page 24 of the Final Environmental Assessment, there is mention of the Proposed Forest Plan Amendment 2. This mention of the Proposed Forest Plan Amendment 2 is an error and should be removed from the document. The need for an amendment was removed in the Final Environmental Assessment since a revised Forest Plan for the Coconino National Forest was approved in May 2018.

This is not considered a substantive change as the Final Environmental Assessment is very clear that the proposed forest plan amendments are no longer needed. This is discussed in multiple places in the document, including on p. 29, where it states, “Two project specific Forest Plan amendments were discussed in the Preliminary EA under the 1987 Forest Plan. These project-specific amendments would be one-time adjustments to the 1987 Forest Plan, however, based on the approval of the revised Forest Plan, these amendments are no longer necessary. The proposed action has been closely evaluated and has been determined to be consistent with all current management direction in the revised Forest Plan.”

# Correction: Identification of a 300-foot protection zone for karst features instead of 50-foot protection zone.

Page 170 of the Final Environmental Assessment includes an error in referring to a 300-foot protection zone instead of a 50-foot protection zone. The text of the document states, “The buffer width for hand thinning activities such as implementing a timber stand improvement prescription will consist of a 50 foot no thinning buffer width from the edge of the karst feature footprint. Thinning and piling of slash can occur outside of the 300 foot protection zone.”

This is not considered a substantive change. The requirement for a 50-foot protection zone is clearly stated in the design features on page 428 of the Final Environmental Assessment where it states:

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| CK5 | Hand thinning to facilitate timber stand improvement prescriptions can occur 50 feet from cave openings or the edge of the sinkhole (karst feature footprint) and outside of any stream buffer associated with a karst feature. Thinning slash must be piled 50 feet or more from cave openings or the edge of the sinkhole/pit (karst feature footprint). Directional felling should be used to fell trees away from the karst feature. |