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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From: Coconino County Health Department
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Coconino County Board of Supervisors Declares Rabies Quarantine

Flagstaff, Arizona - Due to a substantial increase in the number of rabid wild animals found in and around the Flagstaff area, the Coconino County Board of Supervisors has declared a Rabies Quarantine. The Quarantine, which begins Wednesday, April 8, 2009, places restrictions on cats and dogs in areas in and around Flagstaff. (A map detailing the Quarantine area is available at www.coconino.az.gov/health.) The Quarantine, which will remain in effect for up to 90 days, also places certain restrictions on feeding and interacting with wildlife.

Between October 31, 2008 and March 31, 2009, 14 foxes, six skunks and one ringtail cat within the Flagstaff urban area have been tested and confirmed to be infected with rabies.

Rabies is a viral infection that affects the nervous system of mammals, including humans. The disease is almost always fatal when not treated. Rabies can be transmitted from wild animals to pets such as cats and dogs, making human exposure a real possibility.

“Because wild animals can become very aggressive when rabid, there is a high level of concern regarding public safety and the safety of domestic animals. The quarantine has been enacted by the Coconino County Board of Supervisors in an effort to prevent the spread of the disease,” said Barbara Worgess, Coconino County Health Department (CCHD) Director.

The Quarantine places certain mandatory restrictions on residents within the Quarantine area.

All cats and dogs must be confined within an enclosure or secured on the owner’s property; or when not on the owner’s property, pets must be on a leash no longer than six feet. Cats or dogs found at-large in the area will be impounded.

All persons within the Quarantine Area who own or control domesticated dogs and cats must make sure that their pets are vaccinated and that vaccinations are up to date. Vaccinations are available from your local veterinarian. To help pet owners meet this requirement, low-cost Rabies Vaccination Clinics will be held at Second Chance Center for Animals, 11665 N. US

Highway 89, Flagstaff, on Wednesday, April 22 and Wednesday, May 13 from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. The cost for rabies vaccinations is \$6.00 (dogs and cats). Checks and cash payment will be accepted.

During the Quarantine period, a team of staff and volunteers from partner agencies will be laying out vaccine bait in selected parts of the Quarantine Area and continuing public education. The Quarantine allows the Health Department and participating agencies to enter private property to place vaccine bait packets. **The vaccine bait packets are not harmful to humans or animals; however we recommend that you avoid touching the packets.**

People are prohibited from interfering with the bait packets in any way, to help ensure that enough wild animals become vaccinated by eating the bait. Feeding wild animals will also be forbidden as a part of the Quarantine. This will help to minimize the opportunity for exposure to pets and humans by keeping wild animals away from homes, pets and people.

In addition, pet owners must not leave pet food outside after sundown, and compost bins and piles must be completely enclosed.

Although many wild animals are nocturnal, it is possible for animals to be out during the day searching for food. If a wild animal is behaving in a strange manner, such as acting aggressive, staggering, or will not back away, call CCHD Animal Management at 928-679-8756. After hours call the Sheriff's Department at 928-774-4523. Wild animals may not be trapped within the Quarantine area limits or transported outside the area without prior written approval from the Coconino County Health Department. Do not approach a wild animal. Call the Health Department for assistance.

A copy of the Quarantine Declaration and a map of the Quarantine area are available at www.coconino.az.gov/health.

The following areas are included but are not limited to:

Northeast area: Entire Mt. Elden area including the trail system, Paradise Hills, Shadow Mountain, Skyline, Swiss Manor, Upper Greenlaw, Lower Greenlaw, Sunnyside, Mobile Haven, Christmas Tree, Smokerise, Timberview Village, E Rt. 66 Industrial, Flag Mall Industrial, and north on Hwy. 89 to Silver Saddle, portions of Doney Park within a mile of Hwy 89.

Southeast area: Sinagua Heights, Falcon Ridge, Foxglenn, Foxlair, Elk Run, Coconino Country Club, Continental Country Club, Lakeside Acres, Amberwood, Walnut Ridge, and Walnut Meadows.

Northwest area: Cheshire/Peak View, Valley Crest, Coyote Spring, South Fort Valley, Lockett Ranches, Northridge, Coconino Estates Area, Mount Elden, Switzer Mesa, Pinecrest, Flagstaff Townsite, and Flagstaff Old Town.

Please contact the Coconino County Health Department at 928-679-8756 or 1-877-679-7272 for additional information.

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