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U.S. Forest Service Chief Pledges \$3.5 Million To Museum Fire Watershed Restoration

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. – Today, the U.S. Forest Service Chief Randy Moore pledged to provide \$3.5 million toward Coconino County Flood Control District’s request for federal funding for on-forest watershed restoration measures in the Museum Flood Area. The funds will be used to design and construct watershed restoration measures on Forest Service land between the Museum Fire burn scar and the City of Flagstaff. Watershed restoration measures include restoration and stabilization of alluvial fans and stabilization of channels, which are done to reduce the level of sediment leaving the burn area and impacting the Mt. Elden Estates area and the Paradise, Grandview, and Sunnyside neighborhoods in Flagstaff. Reducing the level of sediment is a prerequisite for more effective existing and future flood mitigation within the City of Flagstaff.

“Coconino County is extremely grateful for the Chief’s commitment to partner with the Flood Control District to reduce the impacts of the post-wildfire flooding from the Museum Fire on our communities” stated Supervisor Patrice Horstman.

“The Forest Service’s partnership is a game changer on the path to improving the lives of the people within the Museum Flood Area who have been devastated by the severe and repetitive flooding,” shared Supervisor Jeronimo Vasquez.

Forest Service Chief Moore toured the Museum Flood Area and the Schultz Flood Area to see the impacts to those areas, as well as the successful on-forest watershed restoration measures constructed in the Schultz Flood Area, which have been extremely successful with dramatically reducing the impacts of the post-wildfire flooding. The Chief was joined by several other dignitaries from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Forest Service, including the USDA Deputy Undersecretary Meryl Harrell, USDA Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Robert Bonnie, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Elizabeth Archuleta, Deputy Chief of the Forest Service Chris French, Southwest Regional Forester Michito Martin, and Deputy Southwest Regional Forester Elaine Kohrman.

After the presentation and tour organized by the Flood Control District, the Chief made the commitment to support the critical on-forest projects. The District will work closely with the Forest Service Flagstaff Ranger District with the goal of constructing the watershed restoration measures prior to the monsoon season. This will be challenging, even though the Forest Service has to complete several important processes before construction can begin.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist, Keisha Tatem, also announced that she has approved the Flood Control District's application for Long-Term Emergency Watershed Protection Program funding for the design and construction of watershed restoration measures on private and municipal lands within the Museum Flood Area. She has forwarded the application to the federal NRCS office for consideration. The District expects to hear within the next week if the application for over \$4 million is approved. The District will be responsible for the 25% match toward the project as well as covering any ineligible elements of the projects.



Flagstaff Mayor Deasy (left), Coconino County Supervisor Patrice Horstman, U.S Forest Service Chief Randy Moore, Congressman Tom O'Halleran, and Supervisor Jeronimo Vasquez viewing the Museum Fire burn scar from Mt. Elden Lookout Road

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