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Sediment reduction project breaks ground in Museum Flood Area

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — A Coconino County Flood Control District (District) project to reduce sediment production and transport on private lands below the Museum Fire burn scar is underway in Lockett Ranches & Mt. Elden Estates. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)- and District-funded Emergency Watershed Protection Project (EWPP) will reduce erosion and sediment transport downstream.

“We are excited to be in construction on these measures, which are so important to Mt. Elden Estates, Lockett Ranches, and downstream communities,” said Chair of the Board of Supervisors and District Chair Patrice Horstman. “This project, which will better manage erosion and sediment transport in the very limited environment that we have to work with in this watershed, would not be possible without the NRCS, and we are very grateful to have them as our funding partner. I’d also like to thank the residents of Mt. Elden Estates and Lockett Ranches for their support and cooperation, which played a key role in making this project possible.”

The \$1.54 million project, which includes alluvial fan reconstruction, grade control and the installation of concrete low-water crossings, will help to prevent erosion and sediment transport that can impact homes, roadways, and utilities. Without a reduction in these very high levels of sediment, any expansion of the floodwater conveyances within the City of Flagstaff will not be effective at reducing the level of floodwater impacting homes.

“Sediment reduction and erosion control upstream is critical to the wellbeing our downstream communities,” said Board Vice-Chair Jeronimo Vasquez, whose district includes the Sunnyside neighborhood. “Although nothing can completely prevent flooding, this project, coupled with the City’s drainage projects that are currently underway, will support reducing the impacts of flooding this monsoon season and for years to come.”

The goal is to complete construction of the Emergency Watershed Protection Project before the 2022 monsoon season. Another U.S. Forest Service-funded project to create on-forest sediment reduction measures is expected to break ground later this spring and be completed by this fall. For more information, please visit www.coconino.az.gov/MuseumFloodArea.