COCONINO COUNTY ARIZONA
FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

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Oct. 19, 2026

The Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership and Coconino County Address Citizens Questions During Community Meeting at Lowell Observatory

GREATER FLAGSTAFF FORESTS PARTNERSHIP

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — The Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership (GFFP), Coconino County Flood Control District, along with Coconino County Supervisor Patrice Horstman, current chair of the Board and Supervisor for District 1, conducted a community meeting on October 14, 2026, for the Lowell Observatory Fuels Reduction Project. The purpose of this meeting was to inform residents on fuels reduction work that is currently being implemented on Lowell Observatory's property.

Section 17 is private property, owned by Lowell Observatory, and is the last parcel on Observatory Mesa that has not been treated. The work being performed is strategically reducing the risk of uncharacteristically severe wildfire that could negatively impact Lowell Observatory infrastructure, nearby neighborhoods, and downtown Flagstaff. The main objective of the project is to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health by thinning trees and separating crown canopies. Work began in July 2026 and is expected to be complete by December of this year.

The project team provided a project overview and discussed the project's goals and objectives. In the interest of public safety, the team also provided information on **temporary** trail closures and the importance of strictly abiding by the signage and checking online for the current trail closure map (see: https://gffp.org/lowell-observatory-thinning-project/). Partners also discussed the strategy for how the area is thinned, which is largely based on the overall goal of reducing wildfire risk in relation to southwest prevailing winds. Partners emphasized the extensive implementation monitoring that is being conducted and how this provides assurance that the project is

being implemented as expected. The meeting ended with a question and answer session, in which residents were provided clarifying information.

This project is a collaborative effort led by the GFFP. Many partners are involved in the project including Lowell Observatory, Coconino County, City of Flagstaff Fire and GIS Departments, Salt River Project, Northern Arizona University's Ecological Restoration Institute, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

For more information visit Lowell Observatory Thinning Project – Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership

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