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News Release

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USDA Commits \$1 Million to Protect Arizona Natural Resources through Joint Chiefs' Partnership

PHOENIX, December 28, 2016 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a new investment of \$32 million to improve the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems where public forests and grasslands connect to privately-owned lands, including \$1 million to the Prescott National Forest in Prescott, Arizona.

Through the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) will invest the new funds in fiscal year 2017 to add ten new projects and support 26 partnership projects already underway. Since 2014, USDA has invested more than \$139 million in 49 projects, across 36 states. Arizona projects include:

Project: Prescott Basin Cross Boundary Project

Forest: Prescott National Forest

Local Partners: Highlands Center for Natural History; City of Prescott; AZ State Forestry; Prescott Area WUI Commission.

Fiscal year 2017 funding: USFS - \$650,000; NRCS - \$350,000

Fiscal year 2016 funding: USFS - \$487,500; NRCS - \$400,000

Fiscal year 2015 funding: USFS - \$650,000; NRCS - \$99,000

The project is located in the central highlands of Arizona and is comprised of 141,156 acres. A combination of drought and the long-term effects of aggressive fire suppression have created an unnatural buildup of brush and tree densities, creating a volatile accumulation of fuel and unhealthy forest conditions. The likelihood of a catastrophic wildfire occurring near the city of Prescott is highly probable.

"This collaboration helps local partners meet the growing challenges faced by all stakeholders that comes with protecting communities, watersheds, forests and woodlands from the devastating and costly impacts of wildfires and other threats, while protecting water resources, and improving wildlife habitat," USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Robert Bonnie said. [Summaries of all projects](#) selected can be found on the NRCS website.

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