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NEWS RELEASE: For Immediate Release
October 03, 2016 **Public-private Partnerships Restore Remote Forests in Northern Arizona**

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Tucson, Arizona – Local and national organizations have joined forces to restore remote National Forest lands in northern Arizona while providing hands-on education to college students. Arizona Wilderness Coalition (AWC) partnered with Prescott College and the Kaibab National Forest to bring 14 college students into the Kendrick Mountain Wilderness for four days of field work and education in land management issues.

The Kendrick Mountain project is part of a larger effort to improve National Forest Wilderness areas. Through the “Wilderness Stewardship Performance” initiative, the U.S. Forest Service aims to assess and restore wilderness conditions. Community partnership projects are especially needed in regions like northern Arizona, where popular wilderness areas are experiencing increasing impacts from recreational users.

AWC’s approach connects land management agencies, students and community volunteers to maintain and restore trails and ecological conditions in the backcountry. Key support was provided by the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance, the National Forest Foundation and Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust to conduct public lands stewardship in northern Arizona. Project locations include



Arizona Wilderness Coalition stewardship project on Kendrick Mountain

Kendrick Mountain and Saddle Mountain Wilderness areas north of Flagstaff, the Red Rock-Secret Mountain and Sycamore Canyon Wilderness areas between Sedona and Flagstaff, and Granite Mountain Wilderness in the town of Prescott. Additional partial funding is being provided by the Arizona Community Foundation, Flagstaff and Sedona affiliates. Northern Arizona agency partners include the Kaibab, Prescott and Coconino National Forests.

The Kendrick Mountain project provided field experience for students of a Prescott College course in Parks and Wilderness Management taught by Professor Doug Hulmes. Together with an Arizona State University student and volunteer, the Prescott College team cleared three miles of the Bull Basin Connector and Pumpkin hiking trails, removing 15 downed logs. The team also addressed non-native plant conditions along the trails, surveying Bull thistle, Cheatgrass and Yellow and Dalmation toadflax, and pulling 27 thistle plants by hand.

Professor Doug Hulmes fostered participant education through lecture and discussion regarding wilderness history, preservation and ethics. *“It’s part of our whole [Prescott College] Environmental Studies program to be engaged with relevant work related to public lands. We’ve had students go on to work with the Forest Service, the Park Service, the BLM and also non-profit organizations related to the environment. This is just one of the ways that we’re involved, because we believe not only should students learn the theory of management as it relates to public lands, but also be involved with some of the issues,”* noted Professor Hulmes.



Cross-cut saw work to clear trail on Kendrick Mountain

The Kaibab National Forest also lent on-site staff guidance and support through Recreation Specialist Joseph “Dutch” Maatman. Maatman shared his perspective on the importance of public-private-student partnerships: *“To be good stewards, we rely on volunteers to help us accomplish - due to time and staff constraints - some of the tasks that we are unable to. I think it’s also important having that public involvementI cannot highlight the importance enough of making Wilderness relevant to younger generations...it’s the most important thing we can do ..that is, if we really want it to endure for generations.”*

Arizona Wilderness Coalition aims to preserve and restore wilderness areas across the state of Arizona. Working with agency partners and nearly 200 volunteers, AWC is conducting fifteen public lands restoration projects over the coming year, engaging students, veterans, and individuals of all backgrounds to enjoy and preserve Arizona’s great outdoors. For more information on volunteer opportunities, contact Brian Stultz at (928) 350-2204 or visit www.azwild.org .

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