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Email From Forest Service 2/3/12

Trail User Conflict Collaborative Planning 2/3/12 - Email from Forest Service

Hello everyone- I wanted to send each of you an email regarding some future listening sessions the Forest will be hosting via Udall Foundation's U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (U.S. Institute).

The Prescott National Forest (PNF) is currently working to assess and refine collaborative efforts with community members in order to develop strategies to reduce and minimize trail-use conflict in the PNF. As most of you are aware, we had a few accidents on the forest between mountain bikers and horseback riders over the last year. Many of you have been very involved in helping us with new signs, educational clinics, and assessing trail conditions. Much work has been done, and I really want to thank each of you for hard work! Now, I need to assess what more can the PNF do to reduce and minimize trail-use conflicts on the Prescott.

With this in mind, the PNF has engaged the U.S. Institute to provide neutral services on this initiative. The U.S. Institute is an impartial, independent federal agency, and their mission is to help parties, including public, private, and non-profit individuals and organizations, improve collaboration and resolve conflicts involving environmental, natural resource, and public lands issues. The U.S. Institute will staff professional mediators to work with the PNF and community members to help design a process to address and minimize trail-use conflicts in a collaborative forum.

As a first step, the U.S. Institute will hold several listening sessions with trail users. The purpose of the listening sessions is to identify the range of interests, issues, and concerns related to the various trail user groups. Listening sessions will be held in confidential, small-group settings with selected trail users and U.S. Institute staff. Information gathered at these sessions will be summarized in a manner that is non-attributable to participants. This information will help inform the PNF how community members would like to engage in a collaborative process to discuss and address trail-use challenges.

The listening sessions are tentatively scheduled for February, and the final schedule for the sessions will be developed with input from the participants.

As a key community partner, the U.S. Institute would like to contact you directly to get your input on identifying potential participants for the listening sessions, and to answer any questions that you may have about these sessions. Please anticipate being contacted by one of the U.S. Institute staff working on this initiative (Brian Manwaring, Program Manager, manwaring@ecr.gov <<mailto:manwaring@ecr.gov>> and Lindsey Sexton, Program Associate, sexton@ecr.gov <<mailto:sexton@ecr.gov>>) in the coming weeks. If you have any questions for the U.S. Institute staff prior to their call, feel free to contact them directly.

Thank you for all the hard work on the PNF and I look forward to solving our challenges together. Betty