



## **Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project Ranger Walks**

Thursday, June 30, 2016 and Saturday, July 30, 2016 9am- 11am

*Led by Karen Malis-Clark, on behalf of the US Forest Service, Coconino National Forest – National Park Service, Flagstaff Area National Monuments Interpretive Partnership and the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project.*

Karen is a volunteer with Coconino National Forest's Flagstaff Ranger District for both the summer Interpretive Partnership Program and Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project. She retired in 2011 from the Coconino National Forest as Deputy Public Affairs Officer, having served as Public Info Officer for wildfire and prescribed fires for over 15 years, which included the 2010 Schultz Fire. Karen also volunteered with the political committee for Proposition 405, passed overwhelmingly by Flagstaff voters in 2012 to fund the FWPP.

The intent for both walks was to offer an opportunity for local residents to learn more about the FWPP on the ground as activity ramps up on the national forest. The walks were well attended with 18 participants at the first walk and 21 joined the second.

During the first walk, participants met at the trailhead at the top of Fourth Street in east Flagstaff and walked a two-mile loop through cutting unit 1, following the alignment of the temporary road to the gas pipeline trail, then returned to the trailhead. Karen was joined by Andy Stevenson, USFS Silviculturist; Jessica Richardson, USFS Project Coordinator; and Josh Bahling, USFS Forester.

During the second walk, participants met at the "Y" trailhead at the intersection of Schultz Pass and Elden Lookout Roads. The group followed a loop through cutting unit 12 to Rocky Ridge Trail, then to the temporary road/Schultz Creek Trail, then returning to the "Y." Karen was assisted by fellow interpretive volunteer, Jane Jackson.

Themes for both walks included: FWPP background, the process that occurred between the post-Schultz Fire/floods through the election, Final Environmental Impact Statement to awarding the thinning contract, the unique agreement between the City of Flagstaff and the Coconino National Forest, current status of the project, planned logging operations and road construction, best management practices, and how this project will provide long-term benefit as a trade-off for temporary impacts. Karen utilized the interpretive technique of facilitative dialogue, using leading questions to encourage discussion. Three handouts were provided to the participants: "What's going on Out There?", Best Management Practices and the FWPP Phase 1 map.

Outreach for both walks included three announcements via email list serves (interpretive program list, Jack Welch's walks list and the FWPP project list). The walks were also listed in the Interpretive Partnerships weekly "Ask a Ranger" column in the *Arizona Daily Sun* (AZDS) and in the AZDS' community calendar.

Comments from participants:

"Every Flagstaff resident should come on one of these walks."

"Now I understand what the paint marks on the trees mean."

"I learned so much about the forest today."



Karen Malis-Clark explains details about the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project on a Ranger Walk, June 30, 2016.  
Photo courtesy: Rick Ruess, NPS Volunteer with USFS-NPS Interpretive Partnership



Another stop along the FWPP Ranger Walk, June 30, 2016.  
Photo courtesy: Rick Ruess.