



BLM AND PRESCOTT NF TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING ON PROPOSED HASSAYAMPA RIVER CORRIDOR PROTECTIONS

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Photo: The Hassayampa River Preserve

The Bureau of Land Management and Prescott National Forest will host a public meeting on February 28, 2024 at 6 p.m. at the Prescott Public Library, 215 E Goodwin St., Prescott, AZ 86303, to discuss a proposal to protect 3,739 acres of land in the Prescott National Forest for 20 years.

The area requested for protection - known as a withdrawal - is home to sensitive wildlife species with native habitat along the Hassayampa River. This river corridor's unique plant community occurs exclusively within the requested withdrawal area, and provides habitat for the Mexican spotted owl, northern goshawk, Cooper's hawks, and flammulated owls. The Mexican spotted owl is listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

The Hassayampa River corridor is located near a historically active mining area. The requested 20-year withdrawal would protect this area and its unique natural resources from new mining, oil and gas, and geothermal development, subject to valid existing rights.

At the meeting, BLM and Forest Service staff will provide information about the requested withdrawal and answer questions. In the coming months, the Forest will conduct additional public meetings and publish drafts of environmental documents (e.g., supporting resource studies and surveys) to fulfill the Forest Service's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.

The Forest Service is the lead agency for the NEPA environmental review process for the requested withdrawal, with BLM participating as a cooperating agency. Under federal law, the BLM processes withdrawals on public lands, including in the National Forest System.

For more information on the proposal please contact Chris Welker at chris.welker@usda.gov or 928-443-8072.