

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HABITAT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
HABITAT ENHANCEMENT AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL**

| PROJECT INFORMATION | |
|--|---|
| Project Title: Fence Inventory and Habitat Surveys for the Conservation of Elk, Pronghorn, Mule Deer, Merriam's Turkey, Rare Species, and Riparian Areas at Buck Springs and elsewhere. | Project No. 10-202 |
| Region/GMU: | HPC: |
| Project Type: Conservation of game and non-game wildlife; Fence inventory; Habitat monitoring. | |
| <p>Project Description: The Coconino National Forest currently works with the Wranglers (a sub-committee of the Friends of the Forest) to collect data for wildlife and range programs. The project would allow the purchase of two horses to replace aging or recently deceased horses. The Wranglers rely on the Forest's horses to accomplish the following: 1) Inventory fences to determine which may inhibit antelope migration; 2) Survey waters to determine where wildlife is susceptible to drowning; 3) Survey the productivity, diversity, and vigor of forage, as well as stubble height; and 4) Inventory tanks to determine exact locations, conditions, and needs for maintenance. This project would focus on the Buck Springs Allotment, a priority landscape of the Coconino National Forest, Arizona Elk Society, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and Fish and Wildlife Service. However, project resources would fund similar work across the Red Rock and Mogollon Rim Ranger Districts.</p> <p>Wildlife Species to Benefit: Pronghorn antelope; elk; mule deer; Merriam's turkey; Mexican spotted owl; Little Colorado spinedace; Chiricahua leopard frog.</p> <p>Possible Funding Partners:</p> | |
| Implementation Schedule: | NEPA Compliance: (if applicable) |
| Beginning: October 1, 2010 | Completed: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Completed: September 30, 2011 | Projected Completion Date: September 30, 2011 |
| PROJECT FUNDING | |
| SBG Funds Requested: \$5,000 | |
| Cost Share Funds: \$10,000 Matching (\$5,000 revenue / \$5,000 in-kind) | |
| Total Project Costs: \$15,000 | |
| PARTICIPANT INFORMATION | |
| Applicant: Robert Garcia (please print) Telephone: 928-203-7517 | Address: 8375 State Route 179 Sedona, AZ 86351 |
| AGFD Contact and Phone No. (If applicant is not AGFD personnel) | |
| Coordinated with: Garret Fabian, Lee Leudeker | Date: 7/20/10 and 8/10/10 |
| Applicant's signature: | Date: |

Comment [G1]: Funding decisions not made until March of 2011. April would be the soonest funds would be available

Comment [G2]: Your info goes here.

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATIONS TO:
Game Branch
AZ Game and Fish Dept.
5000 W. Carefree Highway
Phoenix, AZ 85086

WAS PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE LOCAL HPC? YES _____ NO X

Comment [G3]: You can present to local HPC if you would like, however coordination with AES is probably most important. I can let you know of the next meeting.

HAS PROJECT BEEN SUBMITTED IN PREVIOUS YEARS? IF SO WAS IT FUNDED?
No.

NEED STATEMENT/PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

The Buck Springs Allotment of the Coconino National Forest hosts premier habitat for elk, pronghorn antelope, mule deer, and Merriam's turkey. It also provides essential habitat for threatened and endangered species, including Mexican spotted owl, Little Colorado spinedace, and Chiricahua leopard frog. The Forest Service, Arizona Elk Society (AES), and permittee of the Buck Springs allotment recently entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to improve wildlife conservation at Buck Springs. Relevant components of the MOU include:

Comment [G4]: Your project focuses on Buck Springs. No antelope occur there. While I know you stated the horses would be used elsewhere, I would do a separate paragraph describing that work and the wildlife to benefit.

Comment [G5]: You can add Black Bear and White tail deer

- AES agreed to fully engage in the development and implementation of planning documents that set forth management actions necessary to improve environmental conditions at Buck Springs.
- AES agreed to seek funding when consistent with the mission of AES; to participate in the development and maintenance of range, wildlife, and vegetation improvements; and to remove unnecessary pasture fencing.
- The Forest Service agreed to exclude grazing on land with high value to wildlife until the required range improvements of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Buck Springs Range Allotment are met. Improvements include enhancement of forage production, diversity, and vigor for three consecutive years; restoration of sponge meadows and other riparian areas that provide important waters for game species and aquatic habitat for non-game species; and construction of fences, cattleguards, waterlots, and other structures that will protect riparian areas from degradation.
- The Forest Service agreed to allow AES and other groups, in cooperation with the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD), to participate in the development and maintenance of range improvements.
- The permittee waived her rights to the allotment permit, with the specific intent to conserve natural resources at Buck Springs.

This landmark MOU provides opportunities to enhance habitat for game and non-game species alike. However, it also shifts much of the responsibility for the restoration of Buck Springs onto the AES, the Forest Service, and other partners with an interest in wildlife conservation, including the AZGFD.

The Wranglers accomplish a large amount of inventory and survey work that benefits wildlife (e.g., they surveyed over seventy miles of fence last year to determine if antelope migration was inhibited. However, the Wrangler use horses that the Coconino National Forest provides, and sustained financing of the horse program at the Forest is not secure. If funds become unavailable and the horse program terminates, then the wildlife and range programs will lose a vital source of volunteer labor. Funding would allow the purchase of two new horses to replace recently deceased and aging horses. Funding would thereby sustain a successful volunteer program on the Coconino National Forest that benefits pronghorn, elk, and other game and non-game species.

Comment [G6]: See project objective comment

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

Funding would provide horses essential to the success of the Wranglers program. It would allow for fence inventories and habitat surveys at Buck Springs and elsewhere. Inventories and surveys provide necessary information to guide the strategic construction, decommissioning, repair, and improvement of fence. Such actions will ultimately provide the following benefits:

Comment [G7]: I know it is redundant, but copy to Need statement also.

Comment [G8]: Not on BS

Comment [G9]: Not on BS

Comment [G10]: Calculate the benefit of this work per year to the FS in \$

Comment [G11]: Make this more clear. What encompasses the care of the animals. What is the \$2000 from the FS for? Also see comment from funding section

- a) Improve the availability of forage and protective cover for pronghorn, elk, mule deer, and Merriam’s turkey on critical winter and summer range.
- b) Promote the movement of game species, especially pronghorn antelope, across the landscape.
- c) Restore riparian areas and other waters used by game and non-game species.

PROJECT STRATEGIES:

- a) Inventory approximately 20 miles of fence per year. This will guide future construction, decommissioning, repair, and improvement of fence.
- b) Survey the productivity, diversity, and vigor of forage across 1,000 acres per year, as well as stubble height. This will help personnel assess the integrity of wildlife habitat and learn where to focus restoration efforts.
- c) Inventory 15 tanks per year to determine exact tank locations, conditions, needs for maintenance, and where wildlife is susceptible to drowning. This information will guide enhancement of critical tanks for elk, pronghorn, and other game species. Additionally, it will guide the strategic use of tanks to move ungulates away from riparian areas and onto ridges, thereby promoting the restoration of riparian areas.

PROJECT LOCATION:

Throughout the Red Rock and Mogollon Rim Ranger Districts, especially the Buck Springs Allotment.

LAND OWNERSHIP AT PROJECT SITE:

Public land. Managed by the Red Rock and Mogollon Rim Ranger Districts (Coconino National Forest, USDA Forest Service).

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:

This grant proposal seeks funding to care for the animals. The value of volunteer labor is estimated at \$14.25/hr. or \$114.00/day. Wranglers ride in groups of two or more. Assuming two Wranglers provide 22 days of work per year (at a minimum), the contribution in labor from the Friends of the Forest’s Wranglers program would equal approx. \$5,000 per year.

IF PRIVATE PROPERTY, IS THERE A STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LANDOWNER AND THE DEPARTMENT?

N/A.

HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

Habitats of the Red Rock Ranger District include desert grassland, Arizona chaparral, and desert scrub. The average elevation for this area is 3,500 ft. The Mogollon Rim Ranger District varies in elevation and habitat type. Elevations range from 4,000-8000 feet. Lower elevations are characterized by pinyon-juniper woodlands. As elevation increases, the vegetation transitions into pine-oak and mixed-conifer forests.

LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

The Wrangler sub-committee of the Friends of the Forest would serve as primary cooperators. The Wranglers have been an active partner with the CNF since 2007. The inventories and surveys of the Wranglers would allow for the informed construction, decommissioning, repair, and improvement of fence. AES, AZGFD, and other groups may collaborate in accomplishing this future work.

Comment [G12]: What is FS part?

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:

This project centers on inventory and monitoring (see section on “Project Strategies” above). In addition to this work, personnel at the CNF will track the following accomplishments:

- A log of volunteer hours spent in the field.
- Miles of fence inventoried.
- Locations of inventoried fence.
- Number and location of inventoried waters and tanks.
- Acreage of lands surveyed for forage productivity, forage diversity, forage vigor, and stubble height.

Comment [G13]: Tie to AES volunteer day

Comment [G14]: Tie to AES water goal

Comment [G15]: Describe what you are going to do with this information (FS commitment) and how it will benefit wildlife. Also include in objective section.

PROJECT MAINTENANCE:

N/A.

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:

Rangeland Management or Wildlife Staff of the Red Rock and Mogollon Rim Ranger Districts (current, primary contacts are Robert Garcia [rmgarci@fs.fed.us] and Janie Agyagos [jagyagos@fs.fed.us]).

WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (see attached worksheet):

TREE SHEARING (AGRA-AXE, PUSH) PROJECTS (see attached worksheet):

N/A

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
WATER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET**

PROJECT NAME: _____

- 1) **Is the water development listed as a priority in the most recent "Wildlife Water Development Annual Implementation Schedule?"**
- 2) **Please list the Development Branch personnel and date coordinated with for this project.**
- 3) **What is the estimated annual inches of precipitation for the area? (mark one)**
 2-4 4-6 6-8 8-10 10-12 12-14 14-16 >16
- 4) **Is there a perennial water source available to big game within four miles of this project?**
 YES (please complete #5 below) NO (skip #5 below)
- 5) **For the accessible, perennial water source nearest this project:**
Name of water source:
Type of water source (catchment, spring, dirt tank, etc.):
Ownership of water source:
Distance in miles from project:
- 6) **Is the target wildlife species a result of transplant efforts?** YES NO
- 7) **Please list any special land management status for the project site (i.e. Wilderness, National Park, National Monument, etc). If private land, list landowner.**
- 8) **Please provide the following information about access to the proposed site:**
Type of access (mark one): 2x4 vehicles 4x4 only foot only**
**If foot access only: Distance in miles: Approx. hiking time:

-- Does access to this site require crossing private or tribal lands? YES NO

-- Please describe any restrictions to public access:
- 9) **Please list below (or on a separate sheet) the material type and dimensions of each component proposed to be added, modified, or repaired.**

- 10) **Was a site visit completed?** Yes No
If Yes, please list personnel that attended and date.

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
TREE SHEARING WORKSHEET

PROJECT NAME: _____

- 1) **What is the estimated acreage of the project?**
- 2) **How are the trees going to be cleared? (agra axe, chain saw, push):**
- 3) **What is the estimated number of trees per acre?**
- 4) **Describe trees to be cleared (species, estimated diameter, single stem, multi-stem):**
- 5) **Describe terrain (slope, soil type, rocks, etc.)**
- 6) **Please list any special land management status for the project site (i.e. Wilderness, National Park, National Monument, etc). If private land, list landowner.**
- 7) **Please provide the following information about access to the proposed site:**
Type of access (mark one): 2x4 vehicles 4x4 only foot only**
**If foot access only: Distance in miles: Approx. hiking time:

Does access to this site require crossing private or tribal lands? YES NO

Is the site relatively accessible for tree shearing equipment? YES NO

Please describe any restrictions to public access:

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

(Please complete the report and forward to Game Branch
within 30 days of the completion of the project. THANK YOU!)

Project Title: _____

Project number: _____

GMU: _____

Project Coordinator (IF NOT APPLICANT): _____

Agency: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Project Completion Date _____

COOPERATING AGENCIES AND/OR CONSERVATION GROUPS, LANDOWNERS, ETC.:

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

PROJECT RESULT ACTIONS:

(List practices implemented as a result of project, i.e. area rested from grazing for 2 yrs., season recommendations revised based on new distributions, data received from project, etc.)

COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROJECT:

(Please list updates, reports, concerns, suggestions)

MAINTENANCE/MONITORING SCHEDULE (from this point on): WHO and WHEN?

PHOTO: (Please attach)

**MAIL COMPLETED PROJECT COMPLETION FORM TO:
Game Branch
Arizona Game and Fish Department
5000 W. Carefree Highway
Phoenix, AZ 85086**