

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

Game Branch / HPC Project Number:	12-101
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PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Buckelew Prescribed Burn	
Region and Game Management Unit: Region I Game Management Unit 1	
Local Habitat Partnership Committee (LHPC): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Springerville HPC 	Was the project presented to the LHPC? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Has this project been submitted in previous years? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, was it funded? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> → Funded HPC Project #(s):	
Project Type: Prescribed Burn	
Brief Project Summary: Prescribe burn ~2,400 acres of previously thinned ponderosa pine, piñon/juniper, grassland habitat type to improve wildlife forage conditions in critical winter range habitat.	
<p>The Buckelew project is approximately 2,406 acres. The project lies immediately south of the community of Vernon with AZ State lands and various private lands bordering project boundaries. Vegetation transitions from thinned ponderosa pine timber to piñon/juniper woodlands then to open grasslands south to north respectively. The variability of vegetation across this landscape coupled with the presence of numerous water sources such as springs, water tanks, and 2 creeks, make this project a priority project for wildlife habitat restoration. Elk, deer, antelope, turkey, and numerous other species utilize this habitat year round for its cover, food, and water sources.</p> <p>Over the past 5 years several vegetative treatments have been completed within the proposed project boundary, see attached map. Under the White Mountain Stewardship approximately 1,286 acres of ponderosa pine/piñon/juniper has been thinned (see attached map). The treatments have reduced tree densities to a more natural conditions and significantly improved community wildfire protection, water flow, and potential wildlife forage production. In order to maximize the potential to watershed and wildlife habitat improvement prescribed burning is required.</p> <p>The next phase in this project effort to improve watershed and wildlife habitat is to prescribe burn the treated and untreated areas. Prescribe burning will result in improvement to watershed and wildlife forage quality and quantity by reducing accumulated needle cast, reducing decadent grass, release nutrients into soil, stimulation of residual browse species, and increase forage production in critical winter range.</p> <p>This project proposal is requesting funding at the amount of \$40,000 to complete prescribed burning of up to 2,400 acres, or more, of important watershed and wildlife transition/winter range habitat within the treated units and grassland restoration areas. The Springerville District considers this an on-going project and will be seeking additional funds in the years to come for prescribe burning focusing in the Mineral Creek area. The Springerville District projects that at least 3,000 acres can be burned every year at approximately \$40/acre combined federal and partnership funding.</p> <p>(PLEASE NOTE: If the project cannot be funded at the \$40,000 level, partial funding will also be greatly appreciated and the District can work with the funding received. We are projecting a cost of approximately \$40/acre combined HPC and USFS funds.)</p>	

Big Game Wildlife Species to Benefit: Elk 45%, Deer 25%, Turkey 15%, Antelope 15%		
Implementation Schedule (Month/Day/Year): Project Start Date: Summer/Fall 2013 Project End Date: Fall 2015	Environmental Compliance: NEPA Completed: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Projected Completion Date: <u>August 12, 2002</u> State Historic Preservation Office - Archaeological Clearance: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Projected Completion Date: <u>See note in Itemized Use of Funds</u> Arizona Game and Fish Department EA Checklist: N/A <input type="checkbox"/> To be Completed by: _____ Projected Completion Date: _____	
PROJECT FUNDING		
Special Big Game License Tag Funds Requested:	\$ 40,000	
Cost Share or Matching Funds:	\$ 40,000* see itemized use of funds	
Total Project Costs:	\$ 80,000	
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION		
Applicant (please print): Rusty Bigelow	Address: PO Box 760 Springerville, AZ 85938	E-mail: rbigelow@fs.fed.us
Telephone: (928)245-8733		Date: 8/28/2012
AGFD Contact and Phone No. (If applicant is not AGFD personnel): Jason Capps (928)358-0813		
Project has been coordinated with: USFS, AGFD, USFWS		

NEED STATEMENT – PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

In GMU 1 it has been determined that winter range habitat is one of the significant limiting factors impacting big game wildlife. The lack of fire over many decades has resulted in increased canopy cover and loss of wildlife forage. Over the last 17 years the Springerville HPC has been focused at improving winter range habitat condition at the landscape level. In the past 8 years over 28,000 acres of winter range habitat has been mechanically thinned within the winter range landscape habitat and broadcast burned approximately 6,950 acres to restore/improve wildlife habitat, see table 1 below. Prescribed burning continues to be needed to maintain these treated areas in an open condition and stimulate forage production for wildlife.

Table 1: Acres treated within Winter Range Landscape Habitat on the Springerville Ranger District

- White Mountain Stewardship (\$USFS) ~24,950 acres
- Acres thinned (\$Wildlife contributions) ~2,760 acres
- Prescribed broadcast burned (\$USFS) ~3,306 acres
- Prescribed broadcast burned (\$Wildlife contributions) ~3,644 acres

Future prescribed burning opportunities continue to be planned at landscape levels across the winter range on the Springerville Ranger District within GMU 1 to benefit wildlife habitat and decrease future large scale

wildfires. With the assistance of wildlife cooperators and federal funds, table 2 demonstrates the opportunities that exist within one portion of the winter range landscape area, see map 2.

Table 2: Five Year Prescribed Broadcast Plans

- Coon Mountain – ~ 1,500 acres, partially funded with remaining HPC/AZGFD funds.
- Buckelew Springs – ~ 2,400 acres, unfunded
- Garris Knoll – ~ 3,400 acres, unfunded
- Hideaway - ~ 2,740 acres, unfunded
- Mallory Springs – ~ 2,860 acres, unfunded
- Whiting Knoll – ~ 4,760 acres, unfunded

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- Improve watershed by restoring open grasslands and maintaining treated areas.
- Restore critical winter range habitat and browse species important for wildlife.
- Improve forage quality and quantity in critical winter range.
- Restore, enhance, and maintain meadows and grassland areas.
- Recycle nutrients into the soil.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND STRATEGIES:

The Buckelew project is approximately 2,406 acres. The project lies immediately south of the community of Vernon with AZ State lands and various private lands bordering project boundaries. Vegetation transitions from thinned ponderosa pine timber to piñon/juniper woodlands then to open grasslands south to north respectively. The variability of vegetation across this landscape coupled with the presence of numerous water sources such as springs, water tanks, and Pulcipher Creek, make this project a priority project for wildlife habitat restoration. Elk, deer, turkey, and numerous other species utilize this habitat year round for its cover, food, and water sources.

The strategy in this project effort to improve watershed and wildlife habitat is to prescribe burn the treated and untreated areas. Prescribe burning will result in improvement to watershed and wildlife forage quality and quantity by reducing accumulated needle cast, reducing decadent grass, release nutrients into soil, stimulation of residual browse species, and increase forage production in critical winter range.

This project proposal is requesting funding at the amount of \$40,000 to complete prescribed burning of up to 2,400 acres, or more, of important watershed and wildlife transition/winter range habitat within the treated units and grassland restoration areas. The Springerville District considers this an on-going project and will be seeking additional funds in the years to come for prescribe burning focusing in the Mineral Creek area. The Springerville District projects that at least 3,000 acres can be burned every year at approximately \$40/acre combined federal and partnership funding.

PROJECT LOCATION:

The Buckelew RX burn project is immediately south of Vernon, Arizona. Legal Location is T9N R25E S2. Average elevation 7300'. FS Roads 2 & 61. Identifying location names; Buckelew Springs, Casimero Spring, Oak Spring, Pulcipher Creek, Vernon Creek, and Carlock Ranch.

LAND OWNERSHIP AT THE PROJECT SITE(S):

(if the project area is private property, please state specifically and provide the landowner's name)

- Public land. USFS Apache-Sitgreaves NF, Springerville Ranger District

HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

Transition pine/piñon/juniper and grassland habitat within critical winter range habitat on GMU 1.

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:

Special Big Game License Tag Funds

Prescribe burn 2,400 acres @ \$16.50/acre includes:

Salaries for 5 permanent seasonal fire employees	\$30,000
Overtime for implementing and monitoring burn	\$6,000
Burn fuel, equipment use (ATV fuel & maintenance)	\$2,000
Monitoring	\$2,000
Total	\$40,000

Cost Share or Matching Funds (for volunteer labor rates please refer to the worksheet below)

Prescribe burn 2,400 acres @ \$16.50/acre includes:

Salaries for 7 permanent funded fire employees	\$35,000
Vehicle use and fuel	\$5,000
Subtotal	\$40,00

Archelological clearance \$2,500 - \$10,000

Note: (approximately 500 acres out of the 2,400 acre project need additional surveys. USFS archeologists including fire crew para-archeologists will complete surveys in the winter of 2012/2013. \$2,500 represents FS force account costs and \$10,000 represents if a contractor is hired to complete surveys. The remaining area has been cleared through forest archeologists and SHiPO in 2005).

Total \$42,500 - \$50,000

LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

Prescribed burning requires very special skills and qualifications limiting the use of cooperators.

WOULD IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROJECT ASSIST IN PROVIDING, MAINTAINING, OR FACILITATING RECREATIONAL ACCESS?

YES[] NO[] N/A[X]

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:

Photo and established range monitoring points will be utilized where appropriate.

PROJECT MAINTENANCE:

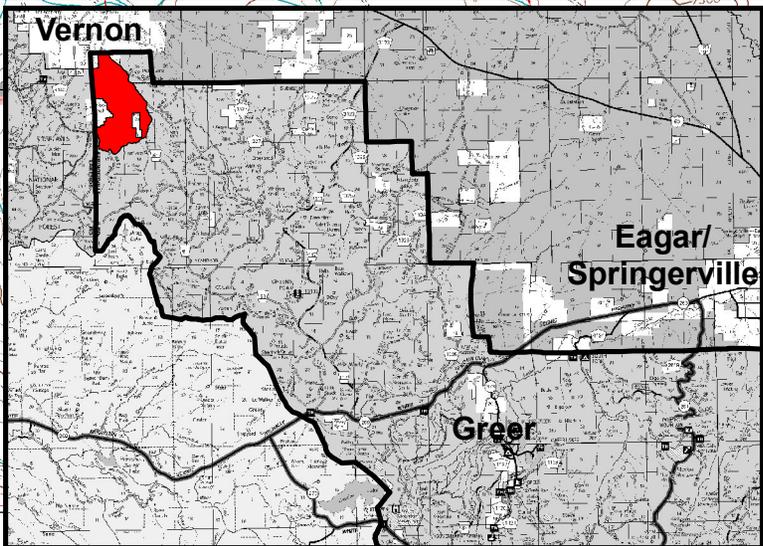
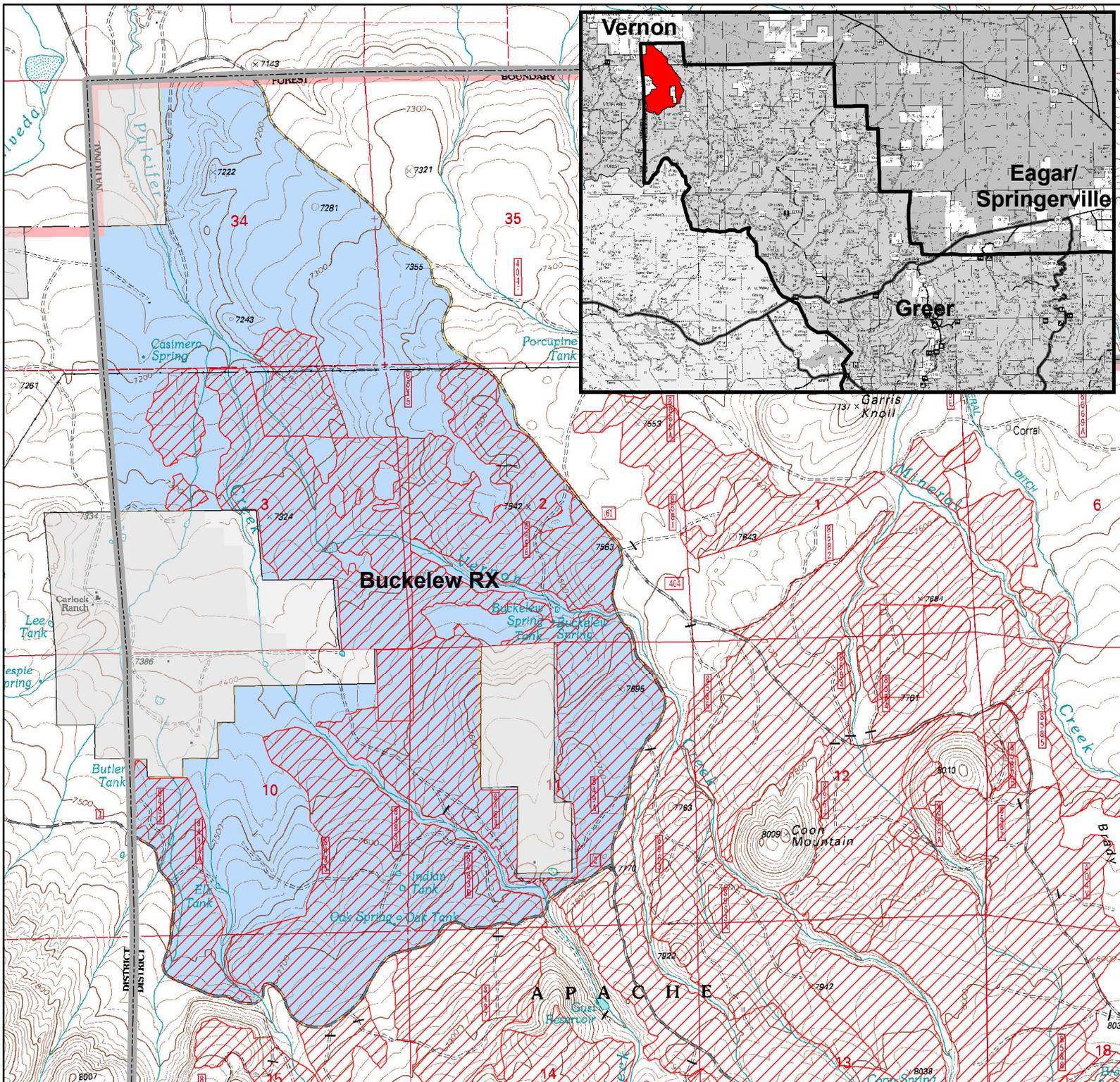
The project area will be requiring evaluation to determine when next burning cycle will be needed.

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:

Rusty Bigelow, Springerville Ranger District Fuels Specialist.

WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (please use the worksheet below):

TREE CLEARING/REMOVAL PROJECTS (please use the worksheet below):



PROJECT MAP

A/S National Forest's
Geographic Information System



Buckelew Prescribed Burn

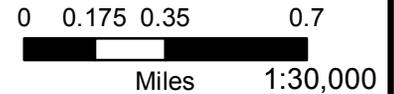
**Springerville Ranger District
Apache-Sitgreaves NF
Apache County, AZ**

T9N R25E S1



Legend

-  Ranger District
-  Private Land
-  Completed Fuel Treatments
-  Buckelew RX ~2,406 acres



Reviewed on 08/28/2012
T:FS/NFS/A-S/Project/SPR/Mineral_RX/
GIS/MXD/mineral_rx_plans

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Data Projection: UTM NAD83 Zone 12
For more information, contact:
Springerville Fuels Specialist (928)333-6247

PROJECT MAP

A/S National Forest's
Geographic Information System



Springerville Ranger District
5 Year Burn Plan

Springerville Ranger District
Apache-Sitgreaves NF
Apache County, AZ

Legend

- Ranger District
- Atascacita Completed 2012
- Buckelew RX 2,406 acres
- Coon Mtn. RX 1,507 acres
- Garris Knoll RX 3,411 acres
- Hideaway RX 2,743 acres
- Mallory RX 2,862 acres
- Whiting Knoll RX 4,760 acres



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Reviewed on 07/18/2012
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GIS\MXD\mineral_rx_plans

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