

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

Game Branch / HPC Project Number: 13-310

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Little Coyote Prescribed Fire

Region and Game Management Unit: Region 3 / GMU 19A

Local Habitat Partnership Committee (LHPC):

- Prescott (Not Formulated)

Was the project presented to the LHPC?

YES NO

Has this project been submitted in previous years? YES NO

If Yes, was it funded? YES NO → **Funded HPC Project #(s):**

Project Type: Prescribed Burn

Brief Project Summary: The Little Coyote Prescribed Fire project is a 2700 acre prescribed burn on Woodchute Mountain within woodland and chaparral vegetation types with smaller areas of grassland and pine. It is part of the Black Hills Vegetation Management Project Environmental Assessment (2011), an 163,000 acre project area with 118,790 acres authorized for prescribed fire. Prescribed fire projects to date include 2000 acres in FY (Fiscal Year) 2012 and 5000 acres in FY 2013. Funding was received from HPC for a 3520 acre prescribed fire for FY 2014. A main objective of the project is to improve the condition of the vegetation/wildlife habitat for mule deer, elk, black bear, and turkey; and reduce the potential for large, high severity wildfire. Project implementation benefits include increased forage and water yields, more resilient stands of woodland and pine, greater diversity and health of plant age class and species, protection of values at risk, and maintaining fire return intervals. Project implementation is scheduled for fall of 2014 (FY 2015).

Big Game Wildlife Species to Benefit: Mule Deer (60%), Elk (20%), Black bear (10%), Turkey (10%). All species would benefit from increased forage to cover ratio and improved browse and grass forage quality.

Implementation Schedule (Month/Day/Year):

Project Start Date: March 1, 2014

Project End Date: December 15, 2014

Environmental Compliance:

NEPA Completed: Yes No N/A

Projected Completion Date: November 2, 2011

State Historic Preservation Office - Archaeological Clearance:

Yes No N/A

Projected Completion Date: _____

Arizona Game and Fish Department EA Checklist: N/A

To be Completed by: _____

Projected Completion Date: _____

PROJECT FUNDING

Special Big Game License Tag Funds Requested: \$ 50,000

Cost Share or Matching Funds: \$ 90,000

Total Project Costs: \$ 140,000 for 2700 acres

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Applicant (please print):

Albert Sillas

Address:

Prescott National Forest

E-mail:

asillas@fs.fed.us

Telephone: 928-567-1124	Verde Ranger District 300 E. HWY 260 Camp Verde, AZ 86322	Date: September 3, 2013
AGFD Contact and Phone No. (If applicant is not AGFD personnel): Tom Bagley 928-856-0800 and Virginia Gouldsbury 928-856-0785.		
Project has been coordinated with: Tom Bagley – Wildlife Manager GMU 19A, Virginia Gouldsbury – Wildlife Manager GMU 19A , Jim Gilsdorf – Chino Valley District Ranger – Prescott National Forest, Aaron Hulburd – Forest Fuels Specialist – Prescott National Forest, Scott Spleiss – Fuels Battalion Chief – Verde Ranger District.		

NEED STATEMENT – PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

The Black Hills Vegetation Management Project (BHVMP) responds to goals and objectives of the Prescott National Forest and managing Mingus Mountain and the surrounding area. Comparison of the existing condition of the BHVMP area and the desired conditions from the Forest Plan indicates a need to:

- improve and manage wildlife habitat for a variety of native species, including species determined to be threatened, endangered, or sensitive;
- manage for a diverse and healthy native vegetation component that is resilient, resistant to extreme weather patterns, and would support wildfires that more closely resemble their historic range of size, frequency, and intensities;
- maintain or improve soil stability, soil productivity, and watershed conditions;
- increase water yield within the chaparral component; and
- reduce risk to life, property, and natural resources from high-severity wildfires while increasing the safety to fire suppression resources.

No significant fire has occurred in the project area in several decades. These foothills east of the Coyote Springs ranch house used to hold some of the highest concentrations of mule deer in Hunt Unit 19A. Over the past 25 years, the deer population in this area has seen a larger drop in deer numbers than the unit as a whole. I believe that this is primarily due to the reduced habitat quality as a result of the overgrown, mature, “decadent” brush that now dominates the area’s vegetative community, due to lack of fire (pers. comm. Tom Bagley, AGFD Wildlife Manager of Unit 19A for the past 21 years).

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this burn is to improve the forage to cover ratio for wildlife and range, re-establish a natural fire regime back into the environment, and improve the horizontal age class diversity of the woodland and chaparral vegetation types. Reducing the overstory density would improve watershed conditions by improving herbaceous species growth and density to a more desired level. There will be many beneficial aspects of this project relating to food production for mule deer, elk, black bear, and turkey. In addition, the result of mosaics of different vegetation types and age classes with openings will produce a variety of different habitat niches and edge spacing desired by these wildlife species. This burn should also increase the water supply available for plants and water sources such as stock tanks, springs and ephemeral streams.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND STRATEGIES:

The Little Coyote Prescribed Fire Project is a continuation of vegetation treatments within the Black Hills Range to enhance or benefit forest conditions and wildlife habitat in the area. Black line will be established where needed to protect values and burn perimeter prior to ignition of the main burn. Cultural sites, power lines, and range improvements will be protected by either removing brush or

avoiding ignitions in proximity to these improvements. Previous experience in this fuel type in using aerial ignitions has proved very successful in producing mosaic burn patterns across the landscape. The use of a helicopter for aerial ignitions is planned for this prescribed burn. This strategy protects soils and drainages from large scale erosion, increases edge effect, protects visual integrity and creates additional protection opportunities for firefighters in the event of an unplanned ignition.

PROJECT LOCATION: The proposed project is adjacent the Woodchute Wilderness on Woodchute Mountain, Chino Valley Ranger District, Prescott National Forest (Township 15 and 16N, Range 1 and 2 East).

Figure 1. Little Coyote Prescribed Fire Project Area Map, Prescott National Forest.

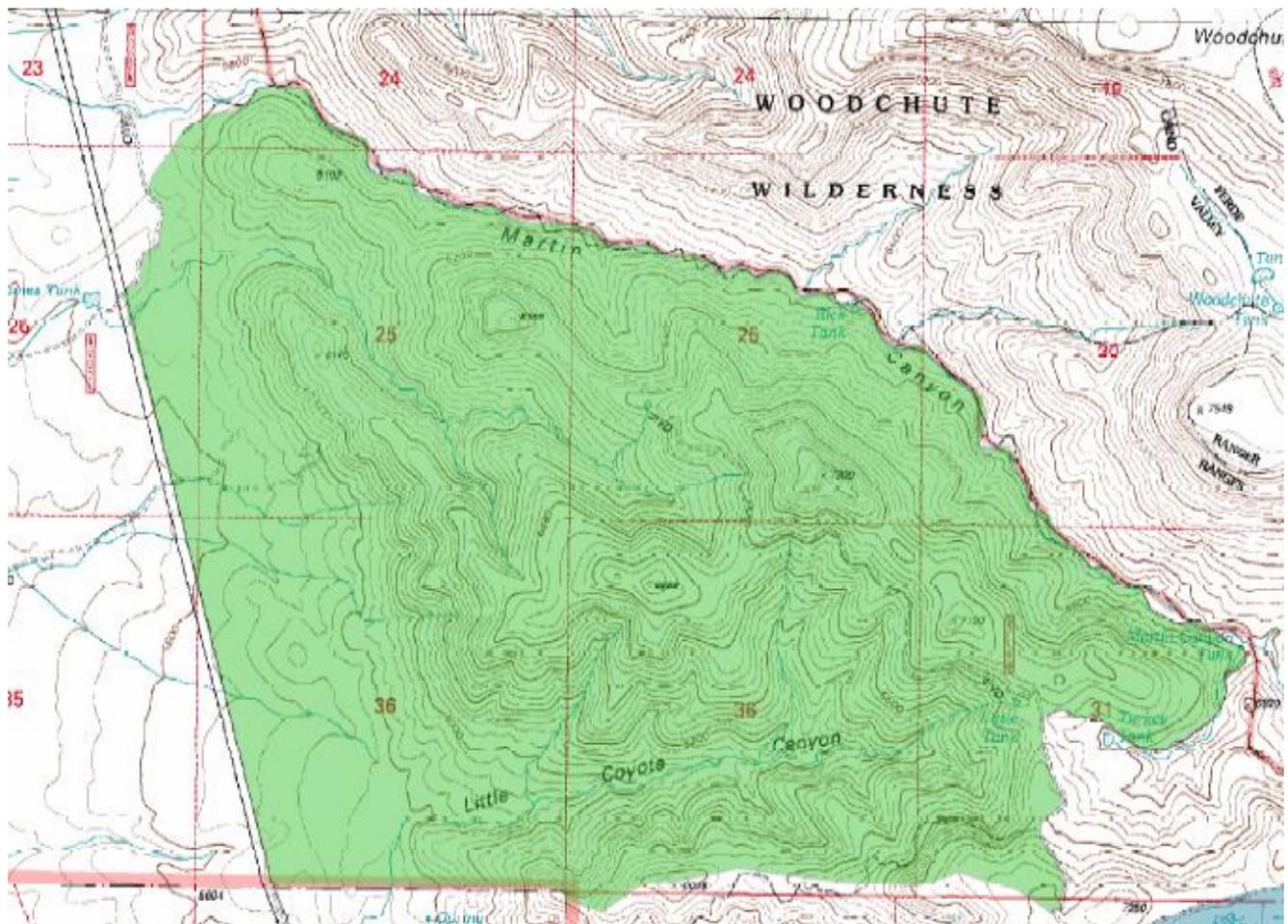
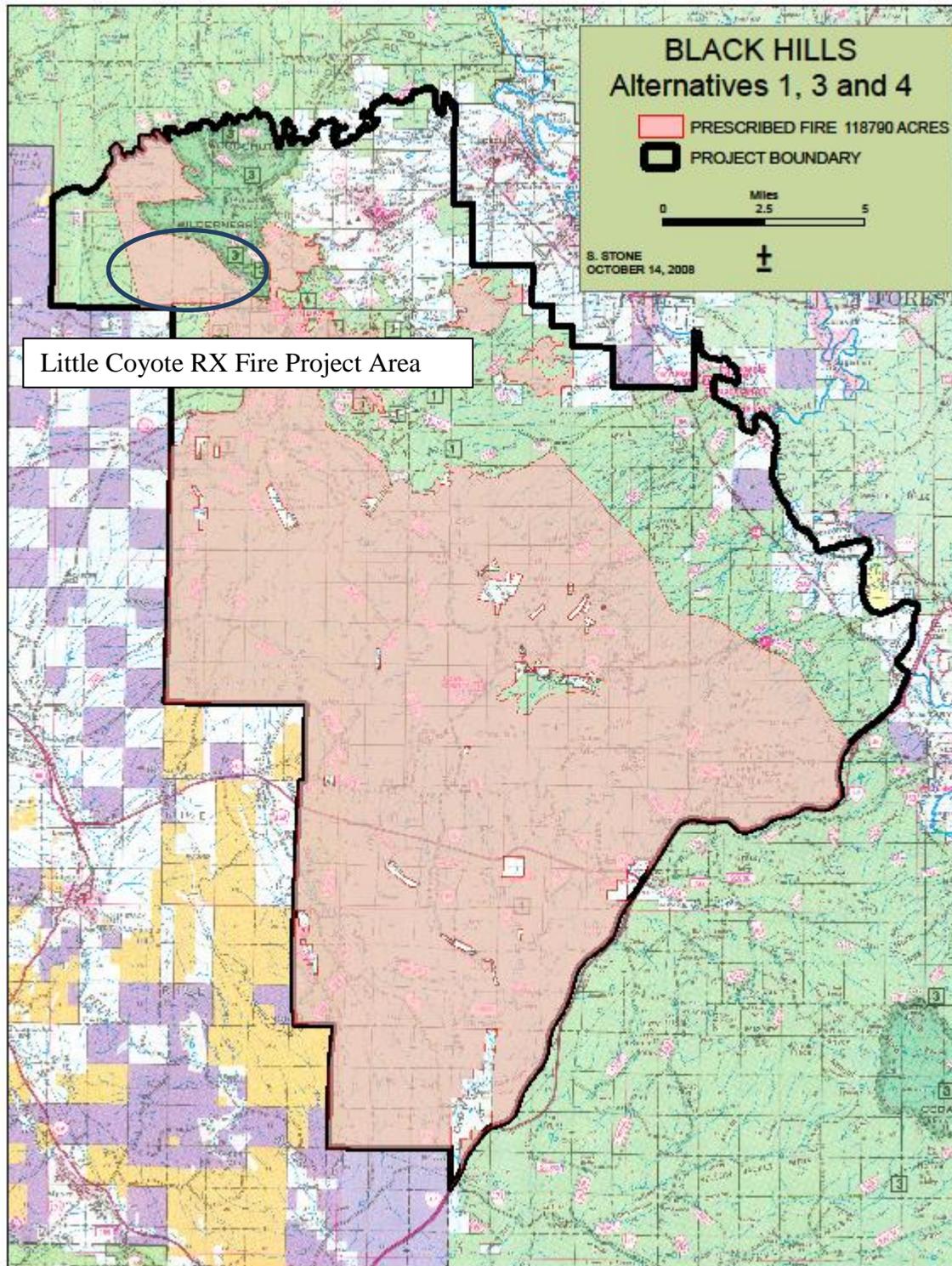


Figure 2. Black Hills Vegetation Management Project Map, Prescott National Forest.



LAND OWNERSHIP AT THE PROJECT SITE(S):

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

- Prescott National Forest

IF PRIVATE PROPERTY, IS THERE A COOPERATIVE BIG GAME STEWARDSHIP or LANDOWNER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LANDOWNER AND THE DEPARTMENT?

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

HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

The project area is predominately woodlands and chaparral vegetation types with smaller areas of grasslands and pine at elevations of 6000 to 7000 feet. There are stands of Pinyon Pine and Gambel Oak within the area that provide valuable mast crops for mule deer, black bear, and turkey. Little Coyote Canyon and Martin Canyon are ephemeral drainages in the project area. There are several watering stocktanks present in the project area.

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:

Special Big Game License Tag Funds

Cooperator and Project Component	Cost-Share Dollars Available	HPC Funds Requested
Implementation of Little Coyote Prescribed Fire	\$85,000	\$50,000
Line preparation of burn unit	\$5000	
Total	\$90,000	\$50,000
Total Project Cost = \$140,000		
Cost Share Ratio HPC:PNF = 1:1.8		

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

LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

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

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

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:

In order to meet monitoring objectives the forest will initiate its Level 1 monitoring plan.

Level 1- General Landscape and Environment Monitoring

This level provides managers with a quick general photo of an area or landscape to demonstrate a change in conditions on a broad scale. Analysis is limited to ocular estimates and subjective assessments usually by qualified fire effects monitors or fuels technicians. These photo plots may or may not have permanent markers to indicate the location of the photos; however the location of the plot center (latitude and longitude), the camera, and the direction of photo should be noted. If change over time is an objective, photos should be taken at established and recorded locations to allow for return visits.

PROJECT MAINTENANCE:

As this area shifts toward the desired condition, natural disturbances such as wildfire can be better utilized and managed easier to maintain the project area. The interpolation of on-site post treatment monitoring data will be utilized to indicate the need for maintenance in the project area. If the monitoring data indicates a change, re-entry with prescribed fire or other management tools will be identified and implemented when feasible.

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:

A project completion report will be filed by the Project leads: Albert Sillas, Fisheries & Wildlife Biologist, and Aaron Hulburd, Forest Fuels Specialist. Project leads will maintain contact with wildlife managers, Tom Bagley and Virginia Gouldsbury through the project to provide informal and formal status updates.

WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS *(please use the worksheet below):*

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

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT WATER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

PROJECT TITLE: _____

- 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):
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). 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: _____ Approximate 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 CLEARING/REMOVAL WORKSHEET

PROJECT TITLE: _____

- 1) **What is the estimated acreage of the project?**

- 2) **How are the trees going to be cleared? (agra axe, chain saw, grubbing, push, chaining):**

- 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)**

- 6) **Please list any special land management status for the project site (e.g. Wilderness, National Park, National Monument). 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 removal equipment? YES[] NO[]

Please describe any restrictions to public access:

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEER HOURLY RATES AND CLASSIFICATIONS WORKSHEET

PROJECT TITLE: _____

The value of volunteer labor should be calculated at the hourly rate of an employee doing similar work, or using hourly rates from the Arizona Department of Administration's Human Resource web site, plus a standard ERE rate of 35%. http://www.hr.az.gov/HR_Professional/Class_Comp/PDF/alphacovered.pdf

\$0.445/mile should be the calculation used for mileage.

Water Development	Volunteer Hours	Volunteer Miles	Hourly Rate	Estimated Value
			\$14.14	
Habitat Restoration and Clean Up	Volunteer Hours	Volunteer Miles	Hourly Rate	Estimated Value
			\$14.14	
Fisheries	Volunteer Hours	Volunteer Miles	Hourly Rate	Estimated Value
			\$14.14	
Nongame Branch Project	Volunteer Hours	Volunteer Miles	Hourly Rate	Estimated Value
			\$14.14	
Misc/office work	Volunteer Hours	Volunteer Miles	Hourly Rate	Estimated Value
			varies	
Community Services	Volunteer Hours	Volunteer Miles	Hourly Rate	Estimated Value
			\$7.44	
Events and Other	Volunteer Hours	Volunteer Miles	Hourly Rate	Estimated Value
			\$14.14	
Research Branch	Volunteer Hours	Volunteer Miles	Hourly Rate	Estimated Value
			\$14.14	
Wildlife Area Hosts	Volunteer Hours	Volunteer Miles	Hourly Rate	Estimated Value
			\$17.44	
Education Programs	Volunteer Hours	Volunteer Miles	Hourly Rate	Estimated Value
			\$16.07	
Totals				