

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

Game Branch / HPC Project Number:	12-515
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<b>PROJECT INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Project Title:</b> Pinaleño Ecosystem Restoration Project (PERP) – Year 2	
<b>Region and Game Management Unit:</b> Region 5 / Game Management Unit 31	
<b>Local Habitat Partnership Committee (LHPC):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safford</li> </ul>	<b>Was the project presented to the LHPC?</b> <b>YES</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Has this project been submitted in previous years?</b> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>If Yes, was it funded?</b> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> → <b>HPC Project #:</b>	
<b>Project Type:</b> Landscape-scale restoration – includes thinning, pile-burning, and prescribed burning	
<p><b>Brief Project Summary:</b>            The Safford Ranger District proposes to implement a restoration project in the higher elevations of the Pinaleño Mountains. This will help create strategic firefighting areas, as well as a key anchor point for future restoration efforts on the sides of the mountain range. The project will involve treatment of 2,641 acres of forest, utilizing silvicultural prescriptions including mechanical thinning and prescribed fire. The project also incorporates Christmas tree removal and public firewood gathering to treat fuels in the project area.</p> <p>The project area is currently susceptible to wildfire and insect and disease outbreaks. These conditions threaten the listed and game species, and the overall health of the ecosystem. Over the past 100 years, fire suppression and other factors have diminished the natural ecological role of fire in the Pinaleño Mountains, resulting in overcrowded forest conditions and a heavy accumulation of dead trees (fuel load). These forest conditions increase the probability and consequences of severe wildfire in the area and increase the risk to forest resources, including listed species.</p> <p>In 1996 and 2004, large, intense wildfires reduced wildlife habitat. Since 1996, progressive insect infestations have defoliated and killed trees in the spruce-fir and mixed-conifer forests of the Pinaleño Mountains. Tree mortality associated with these outbreaks has led to increased fuel loading and heightened the probability of wildfire.</p> <p>This project will begin a long process to restore the fire-adapted ecosystem in the Pinaleño Mountains and to protect and restore habitat for wildlife species. The purpose of the project is to reduce fuel loading, encourage the return of the natural fire cycle, increase resiliency of mixed-conifer stands in the project area to insect and disease, and protect and restore wildlife habitat.</p>	
<p><b>Big Game Wildlife Species to Benefit:</b>            Gould’s Turkey – This species will benefit from increased understory grass and forb growth, and longer-term maturation of roost trees. New understory growth should be more nutrient-rich post-burning.            Coue’s White-tailed deer – This species will benefit from burning, which will increase grass and forb growth, and knock back shrubs to a height at which new growth is within reach. New growth will also be more palatable and nutrient-rich.            Bears – Bears will benefit from the rejuvenation of grasses, shrubs, and trees, which will increase berry/acorn production.</p>	

<b>Implementation Schedule</b> (Month/Day/Year):  Overall Project Dates: September 2012 – March 2022  Treatment Block 2 (this proposal) Project Start Date: September 2013  Project End Date: March 2014	<b>Environmental Compliance:</b> NEPA Completed: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No[] N/A[] Projected Completion Date: <u>December 2022</u>  State Historic Preservation Office - Archaeological Clearance: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No[] N/A[] Projected Completion Date: _____  Arizona Game and Fish Department EA Checklist: N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To be Completed by: _____ Projected Completion Date: _____
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**PROJECT FUNDING**

<b>Special Big Game License Tag Funds Requested:</b>	\$ 35,000
<b>Cost Share or Matching Funds:</b>	\$ 253,700 (USFS), \$62,000 (NWTF)
<b>Total Project Costs:</b>	<b>\$ 350,700</b>

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

<b>Applicant</b> (please print): Kent Ellett	<b>Address:</b> Safford Ranger District 711 14 <sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite D Safford, AZ 85546	<b>E-mail:</b> kellett@fs.fed.us
<b>Telephone:</b> 928-428-4150		<b>Date:</b> 9/4/2012

**AGFD Contact and Phone No.** (If applicant is not AGFD personnel):

**Project has been coordinated with:**  
AGFD, USFWS, NWTF, UofA, CBD, SIA, local public

**NEED STATEMENT – PROBLEM ANALYSIS:**

The vegetation in the Pinaleño Mountains is mainly comprised of mixed conifer forest, in which fire suppression and insect infestations have greatly changed natural conditions. The treatment area currently contains high quantities of dead and down material; woody species have encroached into the meadow areas, and the wooded areas are abnormally dense and lacking understory plant species. Generally, fuel conditions have strayed from the natural range of variation.

Treatment of the project area would benefit wildlife habitat and recreational uses, and will provide some stimulation of the local economy. Thinning and prescribed fire treatments in the area will improve Forest health, reduce the likelihood of uncharacteristically large or severe wildfires, restore meadows, improve wildlife habitat, and allow for better improved hunting opportunities in the future.

**PROJECT OBJECTIVES:**

We propose to thin and apply prescribed fires within the mixed conifer area (i.e., high elevations) of the Pinaleño Mountains to reduce fuel-loading, encourage understory growth, and restore the natural fire regime. The eventual goal would be to allow natural ignition fires to once again play a natural ecological role throughout the mountain range. Benefits may also include the

following: (1) improved wildlife habitat; (2) protection of old-growth Douglas-fir; (3) reduced threats to Federally-listed species, including Mexican spotted owls and Mount Graham red squirrels, (4) and improved forest health, evident in improved resistance and resilience to wildfire and insect outbreaks.

The first 5 treatment blocks are located on the south side of Swift Trail (Highway 366), and will dramatically increase the Forest Service's ability to fight fires that start on the south-facing (i.e., hotter, drier) slopes of the Pinaleño Mountains.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND STRATEGIES:**

A series of treatment blocks are scheduled to be treated over a 10-year period. Block 1 treatments are scheduled to begin in September 2012 and end by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. This proposal is for Block 2, which will occur from September 2013 through March 2014.

Block 2 Treatments will include the following:

<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Commercial Logging	427.5
PCT; Lop/Scatter, Pile/Burn	6.5

Thinning within Treatment Block 2 will primarily involve thinning from below, and treating trees up to 18 inches in diameter. Treatments will focus on creating a mosaic of forested areas with a scattering of small openings, and within the forested patches, a range of densities, so that thickly-forested areas are interspersed with more open areas.

**PROJECT LOCATION:**

T 8 and 9 S, R23 and 24 E. See map for Forest Service portion of burn.

**LAND OWNERSHIP AT PROJECT SITE (Please state specifically if PRIVATE PROPERTY and provide landowner's name):**

All lands fall within the Coronado National Forest

**HABITAT DESCRIPTION:**

The vegetation in the treatment area is mainly comprised of mixed conifer forest, interspersed with high-elevation meadows. Dominant tree species include Douglas-fir, Ponderosa pine, white pine, Engelmann spruce, corkbark fir, and white fir. These areas currently contain high quantities of dead and down material; woody species have encroached into the meadow areas, and the wooded areas are abnormally dense and lacking understory plant species. Elevation ranges from approximately 8,000 feet to 10,000 feet.

**ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:**

Activity	Acres	Acres/ Person or Crew/ Day	Cost/ Person or Crew/ Day	Cost/ Acre	Cost
Ft. Grant Crew	120	4	1500	375	45,000
Ft. Grant Rehab					5,000
Intermediate Sawyer					14,400
Intermediate Sawyer					12,000
Sale Administration					25,000
Stewardship (Harvest)	491			800	392,800
Carryover FY12 (anticipated)					-150,000

Equipment	Cost/Unit	Qty	Cost
Supplies, Saw and Rx Fire	1	2000	2000
Vehicles	1	4500	4500
			0
			0

**Grand Total:**

**\$350,700**

**LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:**

USFS (primary agency – 80% financial), NWTf (stewardship agreement – primary contractors – 20% financial)

**PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:**

Pre- and post-burn fuel inventories, Mexican spotted owl surveys, Mount Graham red squirrel surveys (yearly), Gould’s turkey surveys, and pre- and post-burn photopoints.

**PROJECT MAINTENANCE:**

With the treatment of fuel conditions and initiation of prescribed fires, this project will allow the Safford Ranger District to incorporate the use of natural ignition wildfires in years following the project.

**PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:**

Craig Wilcox, Coronado National Forest Silviculturist  
 Anne L. Casey, District Biologist  
 Buddy Zale, Fire Management Officer

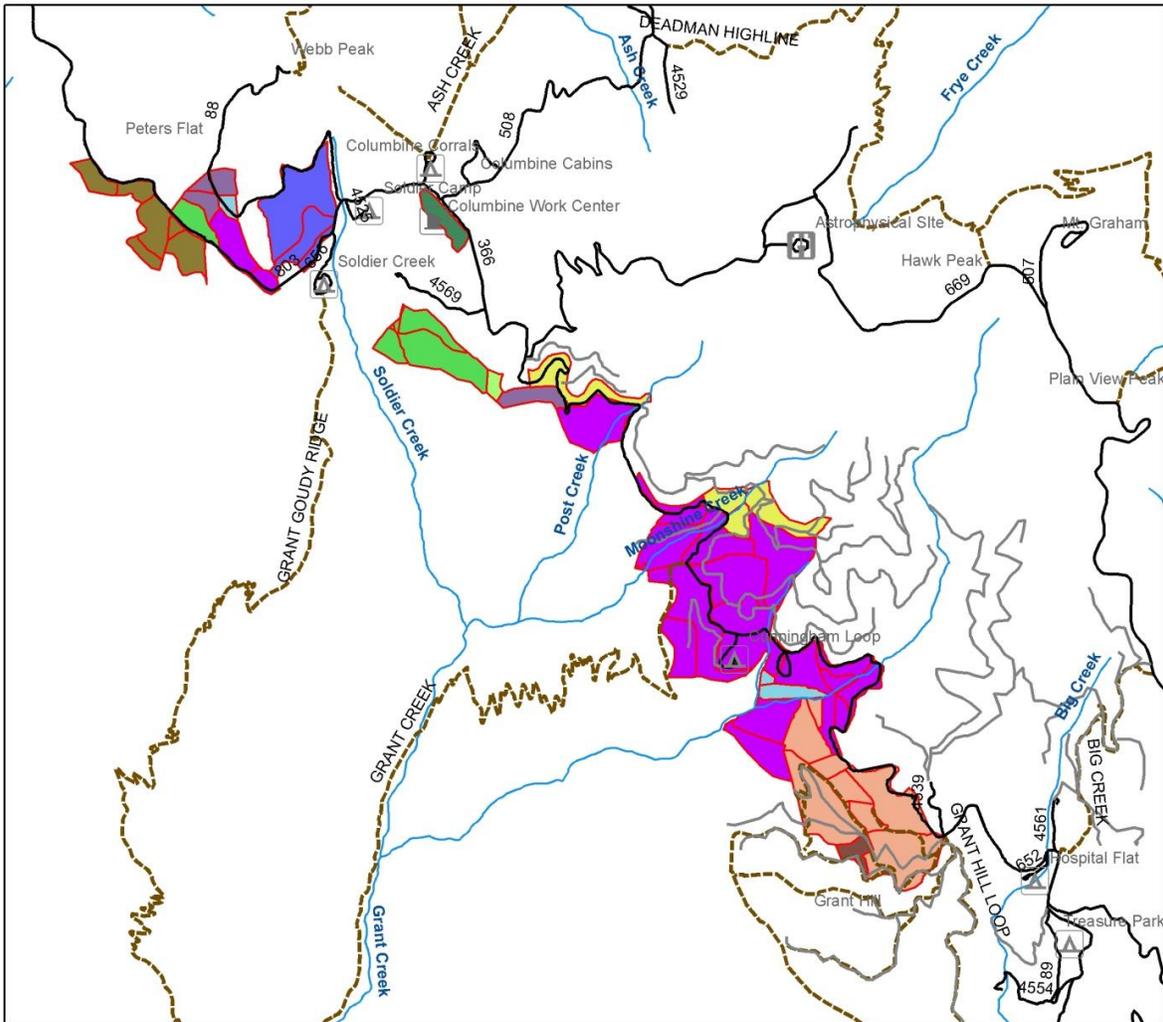
**WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (see attached worksheet):**

N/A

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

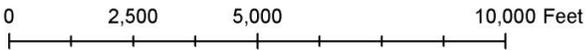
N/A

**MAP OF PROJECT AREA – Treatment Block 2 is the portion of the map east of Post Creek**



**Implementation 2013**

	No Silv; Lop/Scatter, Pile/Burn
	No Silv; Lop/Scatter, Pile/Burn, Underburn
	No Silv; Lop/Scatter, Underburn
	No Silv; Underburn
	Snags; Lop/Scatter, Pile/Burn
	Snags; Lop/Scatter, Pile/Burn, Underburn
	Thin 18"; Lop/Scatter, Pile/Burn
	Thin 18"; Lop/Scatter, Pile/Burn, Underburn
	Thin 9"; Lop/Scatter, Pile/Burn
	Thin 18"; Lop/Scatter, Underburn
	Thin 9"; Lop/Scatter, Underburn



**PERP: Implementation 2013  
Columbine and Grant Creek**

