

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

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Unit 1 Landscape Restoration Maintenance Burns

Project No. 09-102

Region/GMU: Unit1

HPC: Springerville HPC

Project Type: Prescribed Burn

Project Description:

Prescribe burn 2000 acres of previously thinned pine, pinyon/juniper, grassland habitat type to improve wildlife forage conditions in critical winter range habitat.

The Springerville Ranger District has completed the NEPA analysis on approximately 68,000 acres across GMU 1 that will allow understory mechanical timber treatments at a landscape level. The treatment objectives included wildlife habitat improvement. Understory mechanical timber treatment and slash pile burning is phase 1 of a strategy which will result in restoring wildlife habitat conditions for big game species. Over the last six years the Forest Service has received funding and completed understory treatments and slash pile burning of over 13,000 acres across GMU 1 on the Springerville/Alpine District (see map 1). Federal funded of the thinning and pile burning is expected to continue at least to 2012. The treatments have reduced tree densities to a more natural conditions and significantly improved potential for wildlife forage production. In order to maximize the potential to wildlife habitat improvement prescribed burning is required.

Phase 2 in this landscape effort to improve wildlife habitat is to prescribe burn the mechanically treated and slash pile burned acres. Prescribe burning will result in improvement to wildlife forage quality and quantity by reducing accumulated needle cast, 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 \$80,000 to complete the second phase (prescribed burning) in 2,000 acres of important wildlife transition/winter range habitat within the treatment units that have been thinned and slash piles burned. The exact location of the prescribed units to be burned with these grant dollars will be based on where the best wildlife habitat potential exist and where the best burning conditions exist during the burning season (see map Burn Unit Maps). The Springerville HPC considers this proposal a multi year proposal and will be seeking additional funds in the years to come for prescribe burning the additional 11,000 acres. The Springerville District projects that 2,000 acres can be burned every 1 to 2 years at approximately \$40/acre.

(PLEASE NOTE: If the project cannot be funded at the \$80,000 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.)

Wildlife Species to Benefit: Several species of wildlife will benefit from the prescribed burns described within this proposal. Species include elk, deer, bear, turkeys, pronghorn antelope, several non-game species and a few T&E species. The Springerville/Alpine HPC is seeking funds from the Arizona Elk Society and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for approximately 95 % of the project costs and the

Arizona Deer Association and the Mule Deer Foundation for approximately 5 % of the project costs.	
Possible Funding Partners:	
Implementation Schedule: Beginning: Spring 2009 Completed: Fall 2011	NEPA Compliance: (if applicable) Completed: Yes <u> x </u> No <u> </u> Completion Date: June 2006
PROJECT FUNDING	
SBG Funds Requested: \$ 80,000	
Cost Share Funds: \$ 80,000 out of \$5,800,000.00 Federal dollars expended to date	
Total Project Costs: \$160,000 – For additional explanation see page 7 (itemized use of funds)	
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION	
Applicant: Vicente Ordonez (please print) Telephone: 928 333 4372	Address: Springerville Ranger District 165 South Mountain Ave. Springerville AZ, 85938
AGFD Contact and Phone No. Tyler Richins 928-242-3698 (If applicant is not AGFD personnel)	
Coordinated with: USFS, AGFD, USFWS	Date: April 2009
Applicant's signature: :/s/ Vicente C Ordonez	Date: 7/17/2009

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATIONS TO:

Game Branch
 2221 W. Greenway Rd.
 Phoenix, AZ 85023
rothompson@azgfd.gov

WAS PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE LOCAL HPC? YES x NO

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

NEED STATEMENT/PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

In GMU Unit 1 it has been determined that quality winter range habitat is one of the significant limiting factors impacting big game wildlife. The lack of fire over many decades has resulted in increase canopy cover and loss of wildlife forage. Over the last 13 years the Springerville HPC has been focused at improving winter range habitat condition at the landscape level. To date over 13,000 acres of winter range habitat has been treated (thinning and pile burning). The completed thinning has opened the overstory and increased the potential to restore wildlife winter range habitat. The completed pile burning of slash as a result of thinning has reduced uncontrolled fire potential. Federal funding is not available to complete prescribed burning. Funding for prescribed burning is now needed to maintain these treated areas in an open condition and stimulate forage production for wildlife in critical winter range habitat. Received funds will only be used for prescribed burning.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- restore critical winter range habitat important for big game species
- prescribe burn thinning treatment areas within critical winter range habitat
- maintain open conditions achieved with thinning treatments
- improve forage quality and quantity in critical winter range

PROJECT STRATEGIES:

- Phase 1; mechanically thin understory and pile burn slash within critical winter range habitat (over 13,000 acres completed to date with Federal funding)
- Phase 2; utilize prescribed fire to stimulate wildlife forage and maintain open understory conditions
- Select prescribed burn unit to be burned based on highest wildlife value in area where the best burning condition exist during narrow burning period

PROJECT LOCATION:

Over 13,000 acres of critical winter range habitat has been thinned and slash piles burned. The District will identify five 2,000 acre burn units with the highest wildlife habitat value within these treated acres across GMU 1 to prescribe burn. Having five prescribed burn units to select from will allow the District Fire Specialist the flexibility to select at least one unit with the specific treatment parameters to burn during the very short burn season (see Burn Unit Maps).

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

Public land USFS Springerville Ranger District

IF PRIVATE PROPERTY, IS THERE A STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LANDOWNER AND THE DEPARTMENT? No.

HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

Transition pine/pinyon/juniper and grassland habitat within critical winter range habitat across

Springerville Ranger District and GMU 1.

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:

Federal Dollars expended to date

NEPA on 68,000 acres (includes archeological clearances)	\$ 800,000
Timber treatment and pile burning	<u>\$5,000,000</u>
Total Federal expenditures to date	\$5,800,000

SBG Funds Requested

Prescribe Burn 2,000 acres @ \$40/acre includes: fuel, equipment, vehicles, and specialized burn crew.	\$ 80,000
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LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

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

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: Vicente Ordonez, Springerville Ranger District

WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (see attached worksheet):

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