

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

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

<b>Project Title:</b> <i>Walker Rx Burn</i>		<b>Project No.</b>
<b>Region/GMU:</b> <i>Region 5/ Unit 36B</i>	<b>HPC:</b> <i>Tucson</i>	
<b>Project Type:</b> <i>Prescribed Burn</i>		
<b>Project Description:</b> <i>The Nogales Ranger District is completing NEPA for 195,000 acres on the west side of the District which covers nearly half of Hunt Unit 36B. The Walker Prescribed Burn is the first in a series of planned burns. This burn is located near Pena Blanca Lake between Pena Blanca Canyon and Walker Canyon. Total area planned for this treatment is 2,100 acres. This burn is planned for April, 2010 and adjoins the 25,000 acres Atascosa burn planned for 2011.</i>		
<b>Wildlife Species to Benefit:</b> <i>Mostly Coues whitetail. Gould's turkeys occur in the project area. We've requested \$5,000 separately from NWTF. Other game species include Mearns and Gambels quail, mountain lion, bear and javalina. .</i>		
<b>Possible Funding Partners:</b> <i>NWTF, USFS</i>		
<b>Implementation Schedule:</b> <i>Walker Rx Burn</i>	<b>NEPA Compliance: (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Beginning:</b> <i>March, 2010</i>	<b>Completed:</b> Yes ___ No <u>X</u>	
<b>Completed:</b> <i>June, 2010</i>	<b>Projected Completion Date:</b> <i>October, 2009</i>	

**PROJECT FUNDING**

<b>SBG Funds Requested:</b> <i>\$ 20,000</i>
<b>Cost Share Funds:</b> <i>\$ 35,000</i>
<b>Total Project Costs:</b> <i>\$ 55,000</i>

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

<b>Applicant:</b> <i>Kent Ellett, Nogales District Ranger</i> (please print)	<b>Address:</b> <i>Nogales Ranger District 303 Old Tucson Road Nogales, AZ 85621</i>
<b>Telephone:</b> <i>520-761-6002 (office); 520-975-0902 (cell)</i>	
<b>AGFD Contact and Phone No.</b> (If applicant is not AGFD personnel) <i>Mark Frieberg 520-762-8172</i>	
<b>Coordinated with:</b> <i>AZGFD, Private, USFWS, NWTF.</i>	<b>Date:</b> <i>August, 2009</i>
<b>Applicant's signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b> <i>August 25, 2009</i>

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

**HAS PROJECT BEEN SUBMITTED IN PREVIOUS YEARS? No**

**IF SO WAS IT FUNDED? NA**

**NEED STATEMENT/PROBLEM ANALYSIS:**

*Recent monitoring indicates the project area is in mid-seral ecological condition with a rating of fair to good range condition. Forage production varies from 400 to 1,400 lbs/acre depending on soil type but generally averages 800 lbs/acre overall. North facing slopes are dominated by oaks with a brush understory. South facing slopes are mostly open grasslands with scattered mesquites and oaks but with areas of thick brush. Ocotillos occur on inclusions of shallow rocky soils.*

*The project area is in Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) 3 which means the composition of vegetation and fuel loadings differ from historic conditions resulting in risk of losing key habitat components. This is due mostly to the thick pockets of brush / litter fuels which puts the oaks at risk.*

*The proposed project is needed to achieve an efficient approach to vegetation and fuels management that would improve wildlife habitat and ecological health in the Tumacacori Ecosystem Management Area (EMA) and decrease the risk of a catastrophic wildfire.*

*The proposed timing fits with other resource needs. Pena Blanca Lake is on the west side of the project area. We just finished removing the sediment from the lake and are working with the AZGFD to design a new boat ramp and parking facilities. We are also designing a new recreation facility at the lake. So it's a good time to burn the area before the lake's restocked and becomes popular again.*

*Also, the timing of the grazing rotation schedules for the two allotments that cover the project area are such that we can rest the area through the burn period and continue resting it until it's had sufficient time to recover from the treatment.*

**PROJECT OBJECTIVES:**

*The project objectives are:*

*To improve the availability of forage and vigor of decadent stands of browse which occur in the project area.*



*The picture below with the dead oaks is of the Walker II wildfire which occurred just across the road (SR289) from this proposed burn. It made great grasslands but took out most of the oaks. One objective is to reduce the fuel load and raise the canopy of the oaks to reduce the risk of a similar event.*



*Wait-a-minute (mimosa) brush is thick on north facing slopes and in drainages. It makes access difficult for wildlife and hunters and creates ladder fuel which puts the oaks at risk as shown above. An objective is to reduce mimosa and other browse 15 - 25% with this first entry and greater reductions during re-entries when we'll be able to safely apply fire at higher intensities.*



*The below left picture illustrates the existing grass condition with a build-up of thatch and reduced vigor. Another objective is to use fire to maintain the grass component and improve the health and production as illustrated in the below right picture right, taken after a recent burn.*



**PROJECT STRATEGIES:**

*The Draft NEPA Environmental Assessment (EA) will go out for 30-day public review the first week of September with an expected Decision by late October, 2009.*

*Implementation of the prescribed burn is planned for late March - April, 2010 but may extend into May or June depending on the burn window. Ignition will be conducted by hand and controlled with hand crews and engines.*

*To raise the tree canopy we would manage for 4 to 6 foot scorch heights in the initial entry similar to this picture of the 2009 Melendrez Pass fire which was managed for resource benefit. The burnt lower branch and leaves/needles will fall off within a few years, raising the canopy to the green line.*



*The prescribed fire treatment will be implemented in accordance with the burn plan which will set the parameters that fire crews can operate within and be on file at the Nogales Ranger District office*

**PROJECT LOCATION:**

*The project is located in Township 23 South, Range 12 East on the Nogales Ranger District, Sana Cruz County, Arizona. It is bordered on the South by SR 289 (Ruby Road), on the East by Walker Canyon and on the West by Pena Blanca Canyon; these two canyons come together to form the northern boundary. (see map)*

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

*The project area is entirely on National Forest System lands. The Clarke Ranch borders the Southeast corner but is outside the burn unit.*

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

**HABITAT DESCRIPTION:**

*The project area is comprised of semidesert grassland, particularly on the ridge tops, shoulder slopes and south facing slopes. It also includes encinal oak woodlands predominately on the north facing slopes and drainages.*

*The picture below is the southeast corner of the project area and is typical of the south and west portions of the burn unit.*



*The following pictures illustrate the north facing slopes, particularly in the north and east portion of the project area.*



**ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:**

Personnel	Daily Rate	Planned Days		Total Cost
Burn Boss	350	2		\$700
Firing Boss	300	2		\$600
Holding Boss	300	3		\$900
Crew	3000	4		\$12,000
Crew Lead	200	8		\$1,600
Lead Assist.	200	8		\$1,600
Engine Lead	227	8		\$1,816
Safety Officer	300	2		\$600
Type 6 Engine	1000	3		\$3,000
Type 6 Engine	1000	3		\$3,000
Type 6 Engine	1000	3		\$3,000
Type 6 Engine	1000	3		\$3,000
Type 6 Engine	1000	3		\$3,000
Type 6 Engine	1000	3		\$3,000
Type 6 Engine	1000	3		\$3,000
Type 6 Engine	1000	3		\$3,000
Type 6 Engine	1000	3		\$3,000
Type 3 Engine	1500	3		\$6,000

(revised 7-02-2007)

<b>Vehicles</b>	<b>FOR</b>	<b>Mileage Rate</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
AFMO Truck	300	0.37	400	\$148
P-21 Truck	300	0.37	200	\$74
Chase-21 Truck	300	0.37	200	\$74
Chase-22 Truck	300	0.37	200	\$74
				\$0
<b>Other Resources</b>				<b>Total Cost</b>
Misc. Supplies				\$2,500
Misc. Overhead				\$2,500
			<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$55,186</b>

**LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:**

- *An application has been submitted to NWTf for \$5,000 to help cover the costs of the burn.*
- *Rio Rico and Tubac Fire Departments will assist in implementing the burn.*
- *The two livestock grazing permittees will rest the project area to retain the fine fuels to carry the fire and continue resting the area until it has had a sufficient time to recovery from the treatment.*
- *The Forest Service will cover the balance of the funds needed.*

**PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:**

*Three permanent monitoring sites are located within the project area and include:*

1. *Quadrat frequency transects to determine and monitor plant frequency and composition and ground cover.*
2. *Forage production transects.*
3. *Fetch analysis which monitors the interspace distance between plant species*
4. *Photo points.*

*We will add to this:*

1. *Line intercept transects to monitor differences in canopy cover.*
2. *Basal area surveys.*
3. *A measuring stick will be added to the photos to monitor how effective the treatment is in removing the lower branches and raising the canopy.*

**PROJECT MAINTENANCE:**

*Initial burns are to be followed periodically with maintenance burns to ensure fire is present and able to play its natural role in the ecosystem. Findings from monitoring efforts will be used to determine when maintenance burns are warranted.*

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

*Nogales Ranger District, Coronado NF.*

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

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

**MAIL COMPLETED PROJECT COMPLETION FORM TO:**

**Game Branch, AZGFD  
5000 West Carefree Highway  
Phoenix, AZ 85086 - 5000**

**E-mail to:  
[rothompson@azgfd.gov](mailto:rothompson@azgfd.gov)**