

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

Game Branch / HPC Project Number: 15-230

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Habitat Restoration for Deer N of the Colorado River

Region and Game Management Unit: Region 2 Units 12A, 12B, 13A, 13B

Local Habitat Partnership Committee (LHPC):

- Fredonia

Was the project presented to the LHPC?

YES[X] NO[]

Has this project been submitted in previous years? YES[] NO[X]

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

Project Type: combination of Water development, mechanical thinning, prescribed burn

Brief Project Summary: If funded this project will be part of a project where NRCS, AGFD, BLM and the Special tag fund provide \$1.5 million in funding to put toward mule deer habitat restoration.

Big Game Wildlife Species to Benefit (% benefit per species) :

Implementation Schedule (Month/Day/Year):

Project Start Date: January, 2016

Project End Date: December, 2020

Environmental Compliance:

NEPA Completed: Yes[] No[X] N/A[]

Projected Completion Date: Will vary depending on funding source

State Historic Preservation Office - Archaeological Clearance:
(Provide Attachment)

Yes[] No[X] N/A[]

Projected Completion Date: Will vary depending on funding source

Arizona Game and Fish Department EA Checklist: N/A[]

To be Completed by: Joe Currie, Luke Thomson, Steve Cassidy

Projected Completion Date: Will vary depending on funding source

PROJECT FUNDING

Special Big Game License Tag Funds Requested:

\$500,000 over 5 years (\$100K per year)

Cost Share or Matching Funds:

\$ 1,500,000 over 5 years

Total Project Costs:

\$ 2,000,000 over 5 years

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Applicant (please print):

██████████ Luke Thompson

Address: 5000 W Carefree Highway,
Phoenix, AZ 85086

E-mail: ██████████

lthompson@azgfd.gov

Telephone: 623-236-7624

Date:

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

Project has been coordinated with: [REDACTED] (ADA), [REDACTED] (MDF), BLM Strip Office, Luke Thompson, NRCS Fredonia office, Steve Cassady

NEED STATEMENT – PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

Rangeland habitats located on the Arizona Strip have been a priority for AGFD since 2006 when the first version of the State Wildlife Action Plan identified critical habitats for restoration due to degradation of existing habitats. The strip provides critically important habitat to several priority wildlife species such as a world renowned Mule Deer population, golden eagles, and California condors. The models AGFD uses indicate both fragmentation and degradation of rangeland habitat due to invading non-native vegetation as the cause for declines in grassland dependent wildlife species. Additionally, from an economic standpoint the Mule Deer population on the Arizona strip has been a focus of the Department since the early 1900s. Additionally, the lack of reliable water has been a known limitation for all wildlife occurring on the strip since the early 1920s, and this need was again highlighted in the department's most recent State Wildlife Action Plan.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

The primary objective of this proposal over the five year grant period is to restore 15,000 acres of degraded rangeland habitat invaded by woody vegetation in areas that reduce habitat fragmentation and provide food and cover for wildlife species. If restorations are located strategically, high quality rangeland habitats can be connected and fragmentation can be significantly reduced.

The secondary objective is providing reliable water for all wildlife species that inhabit the Arizona strip, which also provides benefits to livestock production and management of grazing systems. Through this proposal, we expect to provide year round water for wildlife on over 110,000 acres of rangelands.

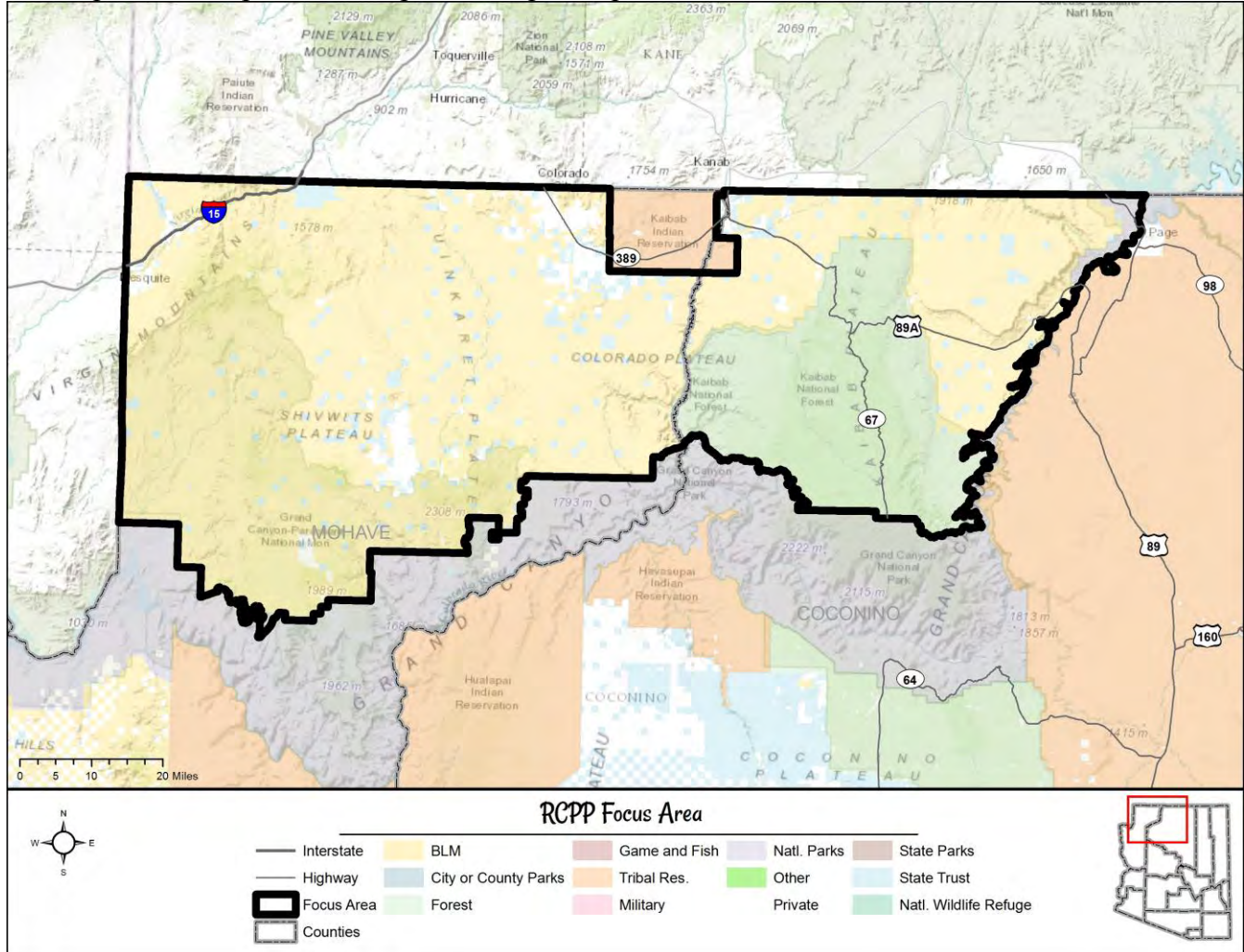
PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND STRATEGIES:

This is a long term proposal that is seeking funding over a 5 year timeframe. If this proposal is successful, the funding will be used as part of a multi-agency proposal that will direct BLM funding, NRCS funding, and AGFD funding to complete habitat restoration for mule deer north of the Colorado River. AGFD staff, including Luke Thompson and Steve Cassady will coordinate the planning and coordination between BLM, NRCS, lessees, the water development program within the Department, and other partners to maintain or create new wildlife waters in the project area, conduct prescribed burns, and remove undesirable brush species to release browse. Several department water catchments are under consideration for this funding, and BLM has 20,000 acres of NEPA ready burns and woody vegetation areas NEPA ready. What remains is selecting the specific locations and acreage to be completed with this funding and the funding from the Department and NRCS. Selection of specific project will begin once funding through NRCS and this proposal is secured. AGFD staff will coordinate with the appropriate agencies and work with the lessees and landowners to apply for funding through NRCS, and the AGFD project lead to fund specific projects over the next 5 years. Annual progress report will be provided to the local HPC and interested Conservation Organizations and agency partners.

PROJECT LOCATION

(Please provide lat/long of project area and datum. If project is larger than one point, please add multiple lat/long points or an existing shapefile of the project area)

See map below, shapefile can be provided upon request.



LAND OWNERSHIP AT THE PROJECT SITE(S):

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

- Private and BLM

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

YES[There will be one once final projects are selected] NO[] N/A[]

HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

Overall challenges to habitat in the focus area include climate changes and wildfire that are resulting in conversion of habitat types. Climate change has resulted in Mohave Desert scrub replacing pinyon-juniper woodlands. Wildfires have resulted in brome and cheat grass grasslands replacing Mohave Desert scrub, blackbrush, and pinyon-juniper woodlands. Vegetation information can be found within the Department's HabiMap (<http://www.habimap.org/>).

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS: A more specific breakdown of the Budget, and the completed project proposal for the NRCS cost share funds will be provided upon request.

Special Big Game License Tag Funds

\$500,000 (\$100,00 per year for 5 years) for water developments located within the project area

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

AGFD Landowner Relation's Program \$250,000 (\$50,000 per year) for brush treatments, prescribed burns and livestock/ wildlife drinkers

NRCS \$750,000 (\$150,000 per year) for brush treatments, prescribed burns and livestock/ wildlife drinkers

Landowner/Lessee \$200,000 (\$40,00 per year) as cash or in kind match/ labor for brush treatments, prescribed burns and livestock/ wildlife drinkers

NRCS \$150,000 (\$30,000 per year) for NEPA and cultural compliance

AGFD \$100,000 (\$20,000 per year) for NEPA and cultural compliance

BLM \$50,000 (\$10,000 per year) for NEPA and cultural compliance

LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

Arizona Game and Fish Department is the lead partner on this proposal.

The Fredonia HPC has been presented with this proposal.

The BLM (Bureau of Land Management) is a federal agency with a long history of working with producers through grazing leases on BLM controlled lands. These leases are critical to the producers within the geographic area of this proposal as the majority of the rangeland in the focal area is BLM controlled lands leases for cattle grazing.

The Fredonia NRCD is a local conservation entity with a strong history of working with producers on priority issues related to agricultural producers within the focus area of this proposal.

The Littlefield-Hurricane Valley NRCD is a local conservation entity with a strong history of working with producers on priority issues related to agricultural producers within the focus area of this proposal.

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

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

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:

To determine the desired outcome of improved rangeland habitat and reduced fragmentation, AGFD will use ongoing annual aerial counts of mule deer fawns to detect changes in reproduction. Reproduction is

directly relate to habitat conditions, so if we can document an increase in mule deer reproduction we can say we have improved rangeland habitat condition for wildlife population on the Arizona strip, which is one of the primary objectives of this grant. Additionally, to determine if the rangeland vegetation is responding, a vegetation monitoring protocol will be established for each individual restoration project during the conservation plan development. This monitoring will be conducted by the producer, NRCS staff, or AGFD staff to document changes in vegetation in the treated areas.

PROJECT MAINTENANCE:

For department water catchments, the department will be responsible for maintenance. For all other projects funded through this proposal and the associated funding proposal for NRCS, project maintenance will be the responsibility of the landowner or lessee and this requirement will be a stipulation in each agreement with a landowner or lessee.

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:

██████████

WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (please use the worksheet below):

As specific water catchments are selected over the course of this project, Luke Thompson will ensure the worksheet below is completed and coordination with the water development section is completed before funding is allocated.

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

N/A All brush work will be aerial application of herbicide or prescribed burning. These treatments will have individual implementation plans and compliance completed on a per project basis.

ATTACHMENTS:

(Please provide cultural clearance documentation from land management agency, e.g., FONSI, Inventory Standards, etc. Also attach any project pictures)

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.state.az.us/ClassComp/CC_Job_Titles_with_Ranges.asp

\$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				