

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

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| Game Branch / HPC Project Number: | 16-205 |
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PROJECT INFORMATION

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| Project Title: Regional Conservation Partnership Program– Arizona Strip 2017 | |
| Region and Game Management Unit: FOR2 Game Management Unit 12AW | |
| Local Habitat Partnership Committee (LHPC): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AZ Strip Habitat Working Group | Was the project presented to the LHPC? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has this project been submitted in previous years? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, was it funded? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> → Funded HPC Project #(s): | |
| Project Type: Mechanical Tree Thinning | |
| Brief Project Summary: In 2016, the statewide HPC committed to funding \$100,000.00/year for 5 years to fund the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) on the AZ Strip. Utilizing the dedicated funding from the HPC for the RCPP, approximately 1,000 acres of winter range pinyon juniper habitat will be mechanically thinned using a masticator. This project is known as the Ryan 1 project and has multiple partners including the USFS, NRCS, AZGFD, and the livestock permittee. | |
| Big Game Wildlife Species to Benefit: Mule Deer | |

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| Implementation Schedule (Month/Day/Year): <u>Project Start Date:</u> Winter 2016/2017 <u>Project End Date:</u> December 2020 | Environmental Compliance: NEPA Completed: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Projected Completion Date: <u>Categorical Exclusion 9/15/2005</u> State Historic Preservation Office - Archaeological Clearance: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Projected Completion Date: _____ Arizona Game and Fish Department EA Checklist: N/A <input type="checkbox"/> To be Completed by: <u>Luke Thompson</u> Projected Completion Date: <u>February 2017</u> |
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PROJECT FUNDING

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| Special Big Game License Tag Funds Requested: | \$ 100,000.00 |
| Cost Share or Matching Funds: | \$ 100,000.00 - \$140,000.00 |
| Total Project Costs: | \$ 200,000.00 - \$240,000.00 |

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

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|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| Applicant (please print): Luke Thompson | Address: 3500 S Lake Mary Road Flagstaff, AZ 86005 | E-mail: lthompson@azgfd.gov |
| Telephone: 928-856-0724 | | Date: August 31, 2016 |

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| AGFD Contact and Phone No. (If applicant is not AGFD personnel): |
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Project has been coordinated with:

USFS – North Kaibab Ranger District/NRCS – Fredonia Field Office/AZ Game and Fish Staff

NEED STATEMENT – PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

In the 1950's, much of the project area received push style treatments that involved pushing the vegetation over with a bulldozer followed by seeding of native grasses. Over the past 50+ years trees, mainly pinyon pine and juniper, have reinvaded the project area reducing the understory brush and grass component through much of the project area.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

The primary objectives for this project are the following:

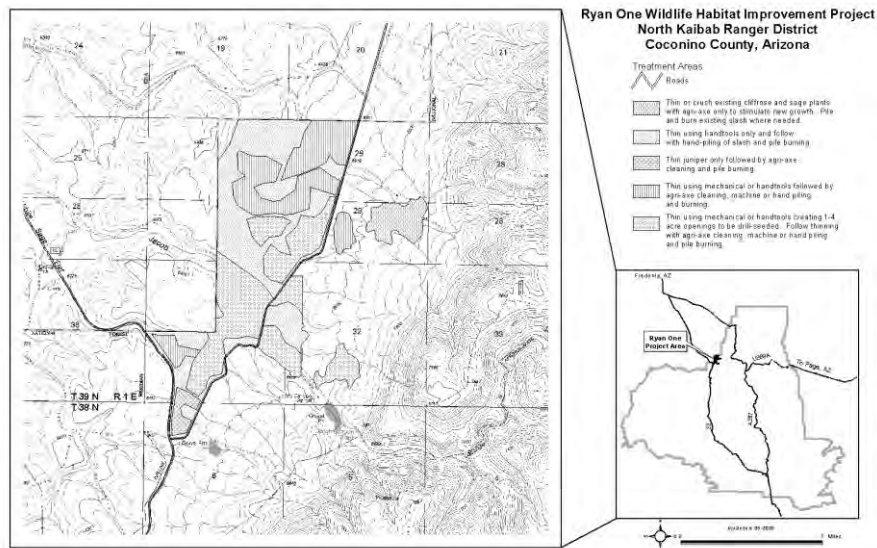
1. Reduce tree densities at varying rates across the project area creating a mosaic across the landscape. Approximate reduction of live trees will be to approximately 30-40/acre.
2. Opening up to ¼ mile (1-4 acres) will be created within the project area to benefit big game, primarily mule deer.
3. Increase browse species for mule deer by removing existing canopy tree cover and removing competition.
4. Remove diseased juniper trees from the project area. In general these are trees that have been invaded by mistletoe or trees that have been impacted by bark beetles and other insect activity.
5. Seed project area utilizing native grass and forb seeds.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND STRATEGIES:

Utilizing a masticator, and adhering to guidelines established through existing NEPA, pinyon and juniper trees will be thinned to approximately 30-40 trees/acre across the project area. Some areas will receive heavier thinning than others creating a mosaic of openings across the treatment area that reflects the natural range of variability for the woodland. Open areas/spaces will be created that will range up to 4 acres in size. The project area will be buffered and feathered from the main road to reduce sighting distance for mule deer. The project areas will also be seeded utilizing a mix of native grasses and forb species. Oak species will be preserved during the treatment.

PROJECT LOCATION:

The project is located in township 39N and Range 1E in sections 29, 30, 31, and 32 and in T38N R1E, section 6.



LAND OWNERSHIP AT THE PROJECT SITE(S):

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

- Land Ownership is 100% Federal lands, administered by the USFS, North Kaibab Ranger District.

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 habitat consist of pinyon juniper woodland with Utah juniper and pinyon pine being the dominant species. Various grass species and brush species such as cliffrose and sagebrush are also present throughout the project area.

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:

Special Big Game License Tag Funds

\$100,000.00 for calendar year 2017. It is possible that funding will also be requested in 2018, again as part of the RCPP, as exact estimates for the treatment will be known when a final cost/acre is established. Current estimates based on ~\$260.00/acre.

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

\$100,000.00 - \$140,000.00 through NRCS. Exact cost share estimates will be known when a final cost/acre is established. Current estimates based on ~\$260.00/acre.

LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

AZGFD – Funding through HPC as per agreement of RCPP match.

NRCS – Funding through RCPP program.

USFS – Project oversight, archeology monitoring, and contract implementation.

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

YES NO N/A

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:

This project will be closely monitored during implementation as well as post treatment to measure plant productivity.

PROJECT MAINTENANCE: N/A

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:

Luke Thompson – Field Supervisor Arizona Strip

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

See Attached.

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT TREE CLEARING/REMOVAL WORKSHEET

PROJECT TITLE: Regional Conservation Partnership – Arizona Strip 2017 – Ryan 1

- 1) **What is the estimated acreage of the project?**
1000 acres.

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

- 3) **What is the estimated number of trees per acre?**
Portions of the treatment area are approaching 80-100 trees/acre.

- 4) **Describe trees to be cleared (species, estimated diameter, single stem, multi-stem):**
Pinyon Pine and Juniper. There is no limit to tree size that can be cut, except by the limits of the mastication equipment up to ~ 18". Multi Stem trees will be treated as a single tree. Woody debri will be reduced by 30-60% across the project area.

- 5) **Describe terrain (slope, soil type, rocks)**
Rolling topography with elevations ranging from 6700 to 6800 asl. Slopes vary from 0-40% and soils are mostly sandstone with sandy loam.

- 6) **Please list any special land management status for the project site (e.g. Wilderness, National Park, National Monument). If private land, list landowner.**
None

- 7) **Please provide the following information about access to the proposed site:**
Type of access (mark one): 2x4 vehicles 4x4 only Foot only**
4x4 recommended
**If foot access only: Distance in miles: Approx. hiking time:

Does access to this site require crossing private or tribal lands? YES[] NO[X]

Is the site relatively accessible for tree removal equipment? YES[X] NO[]

Please describe any restrictions to public access: None.

