

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

HPC Project Number:

20-510

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title:		South Legunita Grassland Habitat Enhancement – Phase V	
Game Management Unit:	36C	Region:	5
Local Habitat Partnership Committee (LHPC):		Was the project presented to the LHPC?	
Tucson		No LHPC meeting was held	
Project Location: (Please provide <u>lat/long</u> in decimal degrees or meters of project area using datum WGS84 or NAD83. If project is larger than one point, please include them all. Provide an accompanying shapefile as an attachment for the project area).			
LATITUDE/NORTHING: 31.6220			
LONGITUDE/EASTING: -111.5563			
MULTIPLE LOCATION COORDINATES: Please separate coordinate pairs with names & commas. (ex. Bob's Tank 34.365, -110.663. Clear Spring 34.55, -110.107, etc.):			
Project Type:	Habitat Restoration		
Water Project Action (if applicable):			
Habitat Restoration Action (if applicable):	Grassland Restoration		
Other Project Type and Action (if applicable):			
Has this project been submitted in previous years?	Previous Phases		
PROJECT SUMMARY			
Describe the proposed action only. Please use plain English, what action are you proposing? (If applicable, please reference any completed compliance including EAC#).			
Brief Project Summary: Mesquite will be mechanically removed from approximately 98 acres of former grassland in an area adjacent to recent grassland restoration activities. Trees will be reduced in density on ridgetops and swales, but left standing in drainages to provide cover for wildlife. The intent is to expand currently occupied pronghorn habitat in the southern reaches of the Altar Valley, complimenting over 3,000 acres of grassland restoration work completed since 2010.			
Primary Big Game Wildlife Species to Benefit:	Pronghorn, Mule Deer, Javelina, Mountain lion		
Implementation Schedule (Month/Day/Year)	START DATE: 3/15/21	COMPLETION DATE: 10/15/21	

PROJECT FUNDING

Project Funding	Itemized Use of Funds
<p>*Qualifying Cost Share should be restricted to support (materials, compliance, and or labor) of the proposed action ONLY (same time and place). Please do not include previously purchased supplies or past completed work.</p> <p><u>HPC Funds Requested</u></p> <p>Amount: \$12,000</p> <p><u>Cost Share or Matching Funds</u></p> <p>Amount: \$14,727</p> <p><u>Percent Match</u></p> <p>51%</p> <p><u>Total Project Cost</u></p> <p>Amount: \$ 26,727</p>	<p>Please email separate quotes if HPC funds are to be used to purchase materials or contracted labor: HPC@azgfd.gov.</p> <p><u>Santa Margarita Ranch Match</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$12,500 (Covers 50 acres @ \$250/acre) - \$2,227 (Cost of CRS Survey: \$22.73/acre) <p><u>HPC</u></p> <p>\$12,000 (Covers 48 acres @ \$250/acre)</p>

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Please indicate the status of the Project's compliance. if you are unsure, please reference:

HPC Compliance Checklist (<https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/hpc/forms/>).

If you have questions regarding the requirement of an EAC, contact AGFD's Project Evaluation Program:

(<https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/planning/projevalprogram/>).

***Please email supporting compliance documents to HPC@azgfd.gov ***

AGFD EA Checklist Completed:	Yes	Completion Date:	7/2020
NEPA Completed:	n/a	Completion Date:	
State Historic Preservation Office/ Archaeological Clearance:	Yes	Completion Date:	2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

Applicant

The project applicant is the responsible party for seeing the work through to completion.

APPLICANT NAME: On File w/ AGFD

PHONE: On File w/ AGFD

ORGANIZATION: Santa Margarita Ranch

EMAIL: On File w/ AGFD

ADDRESS: On File w/ AGFD

AGFD Project Proponent

The Project Proponent is responsible for compliance, implementation, and annual/final reporting requirements.

AGFD CONTACT NAME: Sarah Gandaria

PHONE: 520-388-4471

Cooperators

COOPERATOR NAME(S), ORGANIZATION, ROLE IN PROJECT:

Santa Margarita Ranch, project execution/management
 Altar Valley Conservation Alliance, project planning
 Arizona Game & Fish Department, project planning
 Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation, funding phase 4
 Arizona Antelope Foundation, fencing modification

PROJECT NEED AND DESCRIPTION

Please use direct language: why is this project important? What problem will be solved? How will you implement it, and how will the habitat be enhanced? Please include # of acres, methods, roles, and any phases. Please be specific and thorough.

NEED STATEMENT – PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

The Altar Valley, south of Hwy 86, directly east of the Baboquivari Mountains encompasses approximately 457,000 acres of Arizona rangeland in Game Management Units 36 A, B, and C. According to a TNC 2012 grassland quantity and composition study, 54% of the Altar Valley is suitable for restoration activities.

This once open area, still supports a small population of pronghorn antelope, mostly in areas where grassland restoration has been completed, or shrub density was low to begin with. It is the desire of the Department that shrub density be reduced to less than 10% on at least 20 square miles, or 12,900 acres, in the southern portions of the Valley in the interest of promoting pronghorn population growth and improving grassland species diversity (Altar Valley Pronghorn Status Update and Restoration Plan Draft--2/14/2017). In the MFA Plan for these units, the need for grassland restoration for the benefit of pronghorn antelope is listed as a Priority 1 Issue.

Since 2010, the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge (BANWR), which encompasses 117,464 acres in the valley, has reduced mesquite density on a total of 3,408 acres. In addition to the already cleared acres, 8,229 acres have been surveyed for cultural resources. Furthermore, AAF recently modified ADOT fencing on Hwy 286 to be pronghorn friendly between the BANWR mesquite projects and this project on the Santa Margarita Ranch to encourage pronghorn to utilize the recently restored habitat.

Reducing the number of mesquites will also increase the groundwater recharge rate, and increase the availability of water to grasses and forbs. With more land cover, the grass will then act as a filter to clean water as it goes into the aquifer.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND STRATEGIES:

The South Legunita pasture is characterized by loamy upland soil, perennial grasses, and thick mesquite densities in the uplands that have encroached from the drainage bottoms.

With tree density being less dense on the ridges than in drainages, it is desirable to remove mesquite from the uplands, but leave most of the trees in the major drainages, and a few scattered trees in the uplands for shade and mule deer cover. A few heavy patches have been selected out for wildlife cover and a small area where restoration is in place where a large gas pipeline was installed. Total treatable acres in the entire pasture is 1,147 acres.

In 2017, the Santa Margarita Ranch paid for a 1,300 acre cultural resource survey across from the recently restored grasslands on the Refuge to expand restoration efforts. In summer of 2018, Phase I was completed with funds from HPC and Partners for Fish and Wildlife Service. Phase II was completed using AGFD LRP dollars in spring 2019, and Phase III was completed in early 2020 using HPC and ADEQ funds. With all phases combined, 850 acres of grassland has been restored over a two year period.

The fourth phase of this project will involve reducing density of mesquite on an additional 200 acres of ASLD rangeland within the same allotment. Funding has been procured via Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife and the Arizona Game & Fish Landowner Relations program.

The fifth and final phase of this project will be to reduce the mesquite density on the remaining 98 acres of the project. A permit to make this improvement has already been approved with ASLD, and will be reapplied for when it expires.

Individual trees smaller than 6" diameter at 2ft height from the ground, and more than 100' from major drainages, which will be delineated on a map and on the ground, will be uprooted using either a track hoe, or bulldozer, ensuring the root crown is severed below the soil surface. Tree carcasses will be piled with a bulldozer or front end loader, and burned when weather permits, following regulations set by the AZ Dept of Environmental Quality and the local Fire Department. Care will be taken to avoid disturbing soil more than necessary, and equipment will be offloaded/loaded in previously disturbed areas.

Anyone can gain access to the site, via a dirt road off of Hwy 286 and through private land that is currently enrolled in an AGFD Access Compact Agreement.

LAND OWNERSHIP AT THE PROJECT SITE(S): Arizona State Trust Land

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN: Will be monitored by Sarah Gandaria

PROJECT MAINTENANCE: Santa Margarita Ranch

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY: Sarah Gandaria

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS LIST:

- ASLD Approved Permit
- Photos of before and after of previous phases
- Maps

Have supporting documents been submitted?

Yes

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
WATER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

PROJECT TITLE: _____

- 1) **Was a site visit completed (Date and with whom)?**

- 2) **If this is a dirt tank project, has the site historically held reliable water?**

- 3) **If this is a dirt tank project and soil data is available, what type of soil is at the site?**

- 4) **If this is a water catchment project, please list the Development Branch coordination date:**

- 5) **Is the water development listed as a priority in the most recent “Wildlife Water Development Annual Implementation Schedule?”**

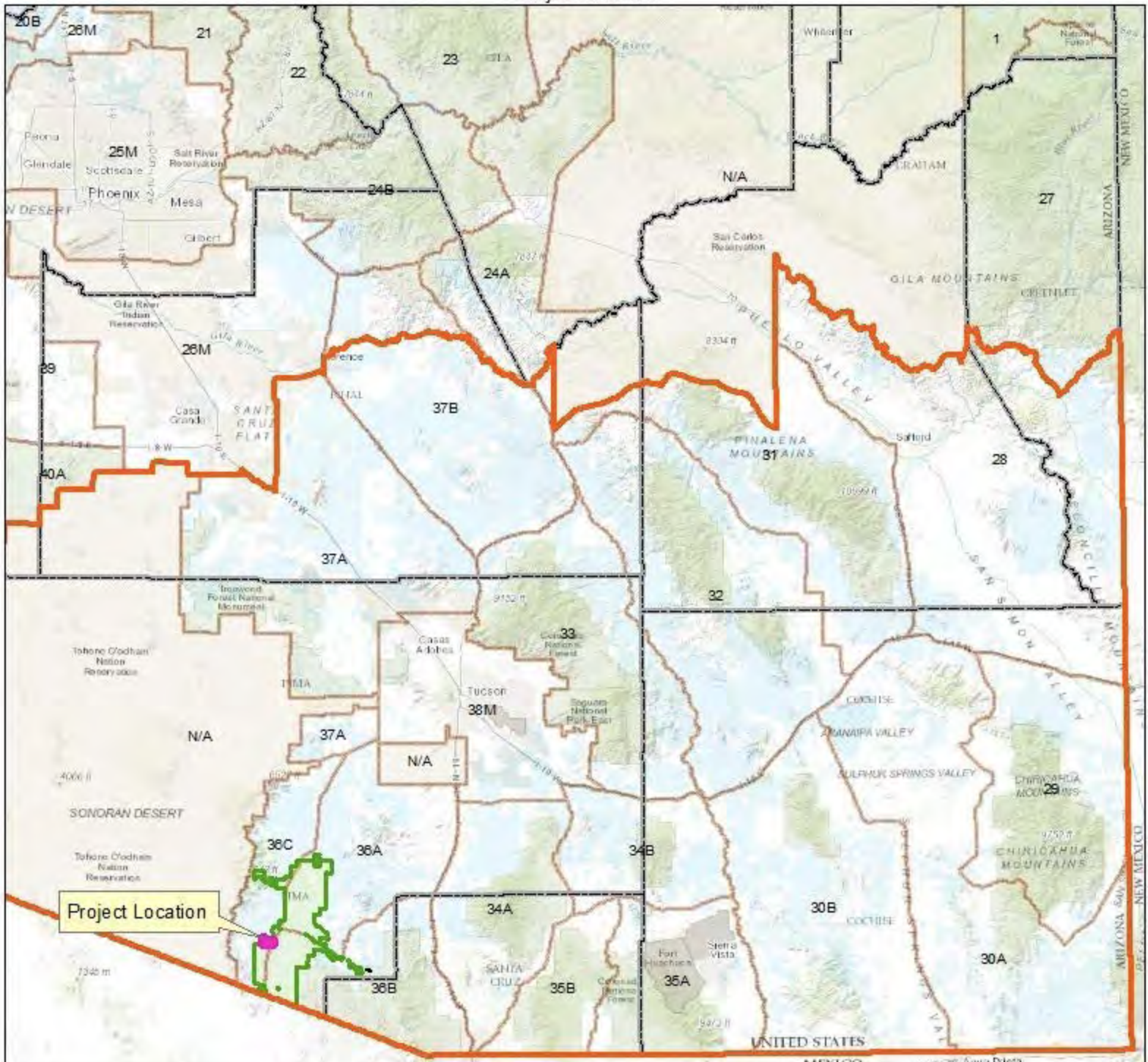
- 6) **If this is a water catchment project, please list the Development Branch personnel coordinated with:**

- 7) **Is there a perennial water source available to big game within four miles of this project?**





Project Location



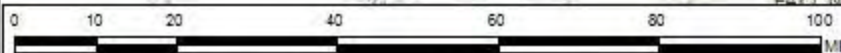
Legend

REGION 5

- Region 5
- Counties
- HPC Project
- Refuge Boundary
- AGFD Game Mgmt Units

Land Ownership

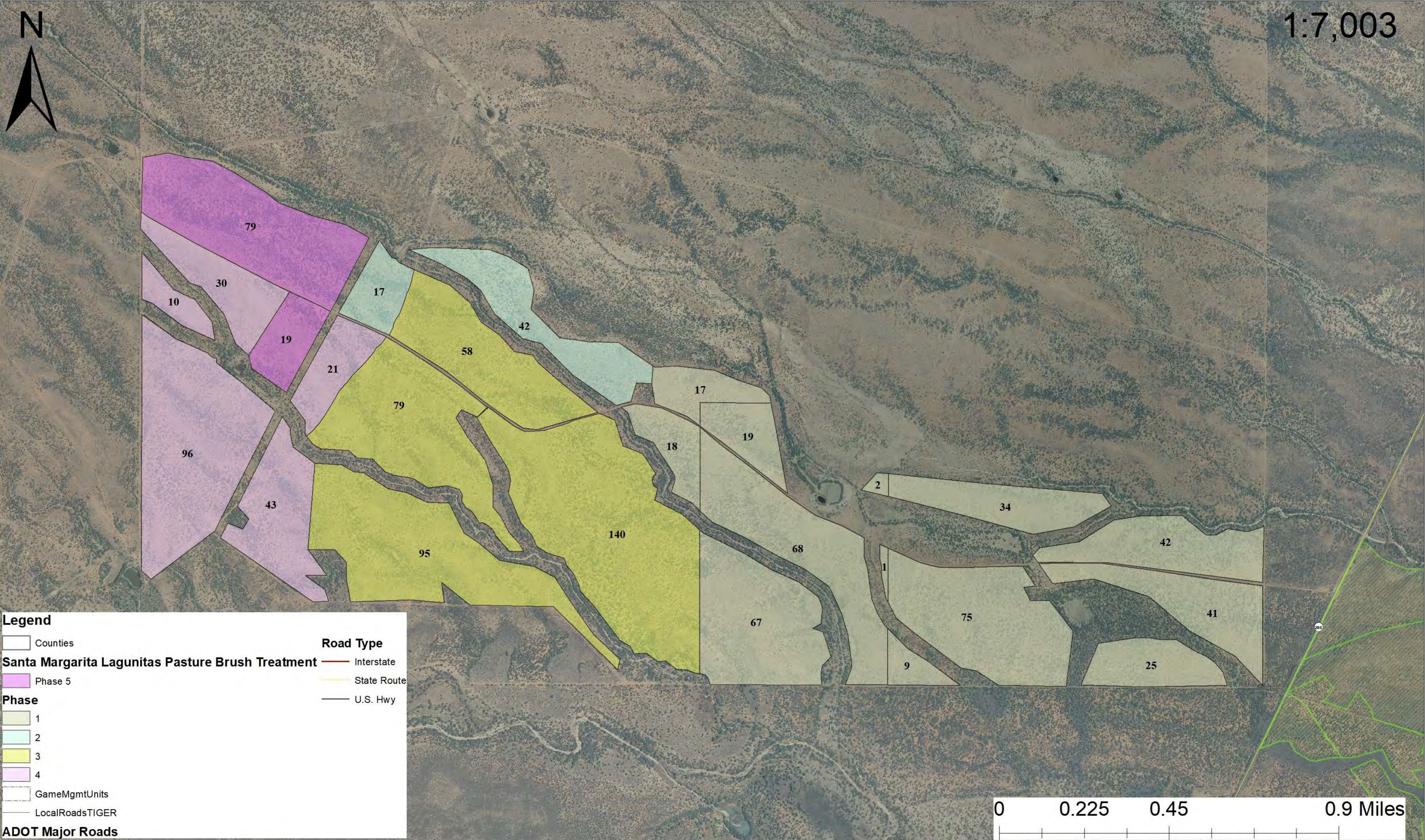
- Private
- State Trust
- USFWS



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Santa Margarita Grassland Restoration Final Phases

1:7,003



Legend

- Counties
- Santa Margarita Lagunitas Pasture Brush Treatment**
- Phase 5
- Phase**
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- GameMgmtUnits
- LocalRoadsTIGER
- ADOT Major Roads**
- Road Type
- Interstate
- State Route
- U.S. Hwy



Sarah Gandaria <sgandaria@azgfd.gov>

Land Treatment Application - Santa Margarita Ranch

[REDACTED]
To: Sarah Gandaria <SGandaria@azgfd.gov>

Mon, Sep 30, 2019 at 2:52 PM

Sarah:

Below is the extension for our ASLD Land Treatment Application for another year until October 31, 2020. Thanks.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 30, 2019 9:32 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Land Treatment Application - Santa Margarita Ranch

[REDACTED]

I agree with you that this project will be beneficial to State Trust Land and I would like to see it completed. As interim Range Unit Supervisor, I am authorizing an extension of one year from todays date for the completion of this project. Once completed, please contact your Range Resource Area Manager [REDACTED] for a field inspection of the treated areas.

[REDACTED]

Range Section Supervisor (Interim)

ASLD

520-444-1142

[Quoted text hidden]