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Resolution No. 11-2000-318

**RESOLUTION OF THE
WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE OF THE
FORT APACHE INDIAN RESERVATION**

- WHEREAS,** the Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation Division has come before the Tribal Council with a proposal to improve and enhance wildlife habitat; and
- WHEREAS,** Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation biologists have described the existing conditions of the project site and described for the Council how this proposal would increase the amount of suitable habitat for wildlife; and
- WHEREAS,** the Canyon Day Livestock Association has reviewed the proposed habitat improvement project, and accordingly supports the project due to its potential to improve livestock grazing; and
- WHEREAS,** the proposal has also been reviewed and approved by the Tribal Plan and Project Review for implementation, provided that approval from the Tribal Preservation Office in consultation with Harrison Burnette is obtained; and
- WHEREAS,** the Tribal Council is aware of the negative effect decadent woodlands have on wildlife and recognizes the long term benefits from treatment outlined in the proposal; and
- WHEREAS,** the proposed burn will be managed to provide for a variety of vegetation following the fire, with no less than 1/3 of the total area to remain unburned to ensure adequate cover remains for wildlife; and
- WHEREAS,** the burn management will be conducted pursuant to perimeters set forth in the burn proposal as approved by the Tribal Council; and
- WHEREAS,** the Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation Division will videotape the burn area both before and after the burn is completed.
- BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tribal Council of the White Mountain Apache Tribe that it hereby approves the Sawtooth/G5 Tank prescribed burn project, such project to involve burning not more than 2,000 acres of existing vegetation from Sawtooth Mountain north to G5 Tank during spring 2001, and to be conducted pursuant to the limitations and conditions set forth in the attached burn description and as stated above.
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the Tribal Council of the White Mountain Apache Tribe that permission for such burn is contingent upon obtaining written approval from the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, in consultation with Medicine man Harrison

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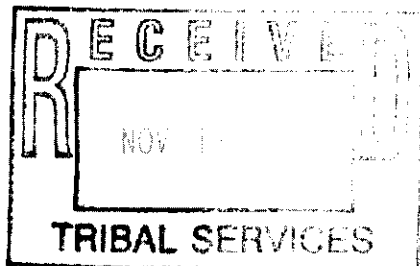
Burnette, to assure adequate safeguards for potential sacred sites in the burn area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Tribal Council of the White Mountain Apache Tribe that such approval is also contingent upon all burn activities being conducted pursuant to the limitations set forth in this resolution and in the attached burn management proposal.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Tribal Council of the White Mountain Apache Tribe that the Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation Division is authorized to seek project funding through the Bureau of Indian Affairs for burn treatment and other sources of funding for native seed application following the burn.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Tribal Council of the White Mountain Apache Tribe that as discussed at the Council meeting the Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation Division will undertake a videotape recording of the burn area both prior to and immediately following the burn to document the before and after condition of the project area.

The foregoing resolution was on November 3, 2000 duly adopted by a vote of FOUR for and ONE against by the Tribal Council of the White Mountain Apache Tribe, pursuant to authority vested in it by Article IV, Section 1 (a), (f), (h), (i), (j), (s), (t), and (u) of the Constitution of the Tribe, ratified by the Tribe September 30, 1993, and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on November 12, 1993, pursuant to Section 16 of the Act of June 18, 1934 (48 Stat. 984).





ACTING Chairman of the Tribal Council



Secretary of the Tribal Council

Sawtooth/G-5 Tank Prescribe Burn Proposal

Introduction

The White Mountain Apache Tribe has conducted its prescribed burns mainly in areas of commercial forests. The lower elevations, comprised mostly of woodlands have been ignored during past prescribed burning. The absence of fire has resulted in dense closed-canopy forests with an understory of dead or decadent shrubs that provide little nutrition for wildlife and poor quality habitat.

The recent burns at Black River and Flying-V have demonstrated that fire is a cost-effective method in managing our wildlife habitats. Vegetation resprouts are more palatable to livestock and wildlife as a result of prescribe fires. The burns also stimulated grass production in areas where heavy cover restricted growth. Furthermore, vegetation following a burn is likely to be more nutritious and generally have a higher forage value. The use of fire also sets back vegetation to an early seral stage which benefits wildlife by increasing and improving available forage.

There are many areas with similar conditions that are in need of prescribed burns. For example, the Sawtooth Mountain region is an excellent example where past fire suppression efforts have resulted in extensive acres of unproductive wildlife habitat and rangeland.

The northern portion of the Canyon Day Livestock Association's grazing range holds very limited commercial timber harvest potential, therefore these areas do not receive any prescribed burning. Fire has been absent on most of this area resulting in climax vegetation of dense and decadent shrubs and trees. Heavy cover in these areas also restrict wildlife movement and the increasing amount of hazardous fuels increase the chance for a devastating fire.

The Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation Division (W&ORD) recognizes the negative effect decadent woodlands have on wildlife. As a management consideration, the W&ORD is proposing to initiate a prescribe burn during the spring of 2001 north of Sawtooth Mountain to enhance and improve wildlife habitat.

Project Area

Sawtooth Mountain is located 2 miles west of Canyon Day community on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation on lands of the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT). The general description of the proposed burn is T6N, R21E, sections 34, 35, and 36; T6N, R22E, Section 31; T5N, R21E, Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 12; and T5N, R22E, Sections 6 and 7 (see attached map). The total area to be burned will not exceed 2,000 acres.

Goals and Objectives

Goal: To increase favorable wildlife habitat and rangeland; to produce early successional vegetation, namely shrubs and herbs which are favored by deer and other wildlife; and to improve accessibility.

Primary Objectives: To conduct a prescribed burn north of the Saw Tooth Mountain area, preferably during the spring, to increase and improve not more than 2,000 acres of existing decadent wildlife habitat; to open-up existing closed canopy overstory; and to disturb approximately 25-50% of mountain mahogany on the project site.

Secondary Objectives:

1. Attempt to create a mosaic pattern, remembering that wildlife require adequate cover (e.g., 1/3 should remain unburned to provide cover, and 2/3 should be opened with an acceptable scorch height of 25 feet).
2. To address concerns over erosion following the fire, the areas with the highest potential for erosion should be seeded, with a minimum of 500 acres to be seeded. Two potential sources of funding for seeding have been identified: the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

The following seed mix of 76% native and 24% non-native has been recommended by BIA Foresters to minimize erosion:

Slender wheatgrass	30%
Western wheatgrass	15%
Crested wheatgrass (exotic)	24%
Sideoats grama	30%
Hairy vetch	1%

3. Livestock and feral horses will be excluded from the area for a minimum of 2 years following the burn.
4. Use this project as an example of habitat improvement and encourage future participation with other livestock associations.
5. Identify other areas for future treatments of prescribed burns.

Methods

1. **An appropriate burn plan will be developed in coordination with B.I.A., Fire Management. The burn plan should have provisions for:**
 - a. **smoke management**
 - b. **erosion control**
 - c. **follow-up treatment (every 20-30 years)**

2. **Under the Tribal Project Plan Review (TPPR) checklist, the following will be addressed before this project is approved:**
 - a. **protection of sensitive plant and animal species**
 - b. **protection of cultural resources**
 - c. **visual impacts of project**
 - d. **erodible soil issues**

3. **Monitor project success, including pre and post-project vegetation measurements and establishment of permanent photo points.**

Project Date

Spring 2001 (*Tentative Burn Date)

Benefits

The most notable result will be an increase in available browse species resprouts. Mountain mahogany (a sprouting species) is favored by wildlife, especially deer, immediately following a fire. There will also be a significant decrease in the potential for a devastating fire. Also, by opening up the canopy it is predicted that wildlife will have increased accessibility to forage sites.

Sawtooth Mtn./G5 Tank Prescribe Burn

- Sawtooth Boundary
- All Roads
- Perennial Streams
- Intermittent Streams
- All Fences
- All Tanks and Lanes



1:20000

1 inch = 1446 feet

