



# Reserve Ranger District Firescape Planning Phase 1 - Analysis

## Background Information

- In 2017 and 2018, the Kerr and Buzzard wildfires burned over 60,000 acres on the Reserve Ranger District of the Gila National Forest. Catastrophic effects were widespread, even in frequent fire forest types, impacting wildlife habitat and watershed health.
- The unburned areas that are adjacent to these burn scars are currently considered at extreme risk for severe impacts from wildfires. The burn scars from the two wildfires offer a starting point to base planning efforts for future prescribed burns or forest thinning.
- The effects of the two wildfires offer both immediate restoration opportunities as well as a glimpse at what the fate of the surrounding landscape could be if management actions are not taken soon. The ability to utilize prescribed fire and forest thinning tools is of necessity in order to restore and conserve the habitat within this landscape and to protect the surrounding areas from the effects of catastrophic wildfire.
- The contracted completion of an environmental analysis of the impacts of using prescribed fire and mechanical forest thinning within this 100,000 acres would be the first step in a process to make 100,000 acres of forested wildlife habitat available for these management tools. This project would open the door for for a future landscape scale forest restoration project, with the goal of having the forest managed by planned and controlled low intensity prescribed fire for the benefit of forest and wildlife habitat health.

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## Proposed Management Action

- NMDGF, in collaboration with the Reserve Ranger District of the Gila National Forest, will contract the Environmental Analysis for restoration activities on the shown landscape. Tools that will be evaluated will include mechanical thinning (chainsaws), fire line construction, burn block layout and prescribed fire.
- The completed Environmental Analysis will be the source planning document upon which the USFS will use for future implementation projects. This would help to make "shovel ready" 100,000 acres of restoration project opportunities.
- Implementation of this entire restoration effort will eventually cost several million dollars, but for this analysis we are in need of approximately \$150,000.
- The deliverable from this project opportunity will be the environmental assessment.

- Google earth link

**Estimated Budget for HSP: \$150,000**

