



# FACT SHEET



United States Department of Agriculture  
Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

United States Department of Interior  
Web: <http://www.doi.gov>

## Making a Difference Tonto National Forest - Arizona

**Project Location:** The Cline Mesa Fuelbreak project is located approximately one-half mile southwest of the community of Pleasant Valley, Ariz. (identified as a community at risk in August 17, 2001 edition of the Federal Register). This area also includes the town of Young, Ariz.

**Purpose and Need:** The proposed fuelbreak is strategically located southwest of Young, Ariz., the direction of the prevailing winds during normal weather patterns, and the direction of strong winds generated by passing low-pressure systems. The vegetation type is predominately pinyon-juniper with some stringers of ponderosa pine. Normally, this vegetation type does not burn intensively and is easily extinguished, but is highly flammable during windy conditions creating fast-moving flame fronts that can have catastrophic results. Construction of the fuelbreak will create modify the vegetation to one that burns much less intensively, will allow firefighters to direct attack and contain before it threatens Pleasant Valley.

**Project Description:** The entire project entails treatments on approximately 2,000 acres. This includes construction of a fuelbreak on 300 acres where trees will be thinned and slash is piled and burned. The remaining area, on the south side of the fuelbreak and the direction of the prevailing winds, will be prescribed burned, reducing both dead and live fuel loadings. This will create a large buffer area from wildfires that threaten the Pleasant Valley from the southwest.

**Status and Timeline:** The project is presently in the data collection and planning stage. Scoping and public information/involvement will begin during FY05. Estimated time of completion is the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of FY05.

**Partners Involved:** The Pleasant Valley Rural Fire Department will be a key player in developing the proposed action with location and descriptions for treated areas. The Arizona State Game and Fish Department will also be key contributors to the proposal as the types of treatments being proposed not only reduce the risk of a catastrophic wildfire and all of the associated negative impacts to wildlife habitat, but will improve habitat quality for many species including elk.

With an emphasis placed on collaboration and getting these agencies involved in developing a proposed action, the numbers of concerns and issues have diminished from these agencies and they do feel that they have ownership in these projects. When asked about the projects during all phases of the project analysis and implementation, they are showing support for "their project". This support carries through to the public and has reduced the concerns and issues expressed by the public during all phases of analysis and implementation.

**HFI/HFRA Tools:** It is predicted that the environmental analysis process will be finalized with decision memo and using the new Healthy Forests Initiative categorical exclusion for fuel reduction – “Hazardous fuels reduction activities using prescribed fire not to exceed 4,500 acres, and mechanical methods for crushing, piling, thinning, pruning, cutting, chipping, mulching and mowing not to exceed 1,000 acres.” The Counterpart Regs for ESA consultation will also be use to expedite the consultation process, which will significantly reduced the time and cost for Biological Assessment and Evaluation process for both the US Forest Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

For more information on this project, contact Ed Paul, (928) 474-7979 or [epaul@fs.fed.us](mailto:epaul@fs.fed.us)

For more information on the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 and the Healthy Forests Initiative, visit [www.healthyforests.gov](http://www.healthyforests.gov)

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