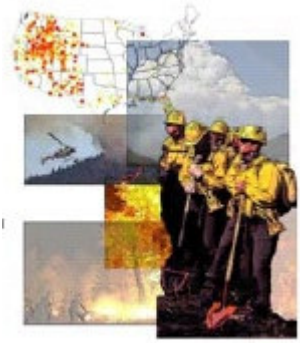


National Fire Plan

Joint Project In Forest Restoration Starts On Gila National Forest, N.M. 2004



A former Catron County, N.M., commissioner and a logger and tree thinner from Reserve, N.M. have teamed up to create employment in Catron County. Recipients of a Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) federal grant, Carl Livingston and Jim Kellar applied for and were awarded a \$360,000 grant for forest restoration that started in mid-June 2004 on the Gila National Forest in the Sheep Basin area, south and southeast of Reserve. Within the first two days of operation, 36 acres were thinned. A total of about 450 acres will be thinned. “Our experience in logging and thinning operations, our knowledge of forest conditions and our desire to improve employment conditions in Catron County make us good candidates to use these grant funds wisely,” says Livingston.

Congressional support was instrumental in bringing to reality the cooperative work between Catron County government, the Catron County Citizens Group and the Gila National Forest. Senator Jeff Bingaman sponsored the “Community Forest Restoration Act of 2000” with U.S. Senator Pete V. Domenici co-sponsoring it. The Act, which created the CFRP, provides grants for community groups and tribal governments working on forest restoration and associated community development in New Mexico.



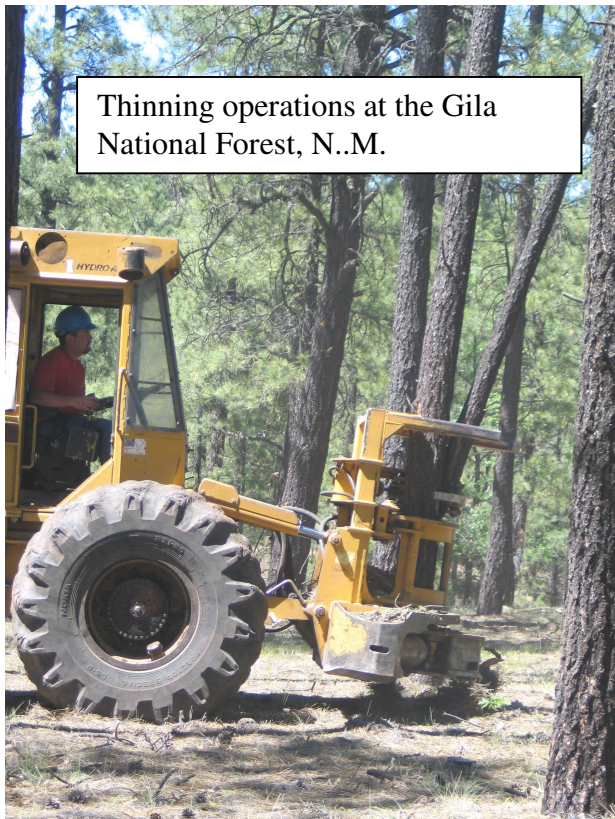
Jim Kellar observes thinning operations at the Gila National Forest site.

Restoration work normally involves thinning of trees. The objective of thinning is to reduce an unnaturally high number and density of small diameter trees and brush, restore ecosystem functions, improve habitat for wildlife, enhance diversity and sizes of trees and restore meadows, grasses and forbs. “We want to get forest restoration working on the Gila; many people in Catron County are excited and anxious to see something happen. The community is ready,” adds Kellar.

Additional grant monies from the Catron County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) in the amount of \$20,000 have enabled Livingston and Kellar to start the restoration work within Sheep Basin. The CFRP project monies will then start after completion of the RAC project. These CFRP funds will pay for employment salaries, insurance, fuel costs and maintenance of equipment.

The trees that will be thinned will largely be small-diameter (under 12") and will enable the Reserve sawmill to start initial operations. "Everyone benefits; the sawmill will be supplied free material from the thinning, the forest will be thinned and jobs will be created in Catron County," Livingston energetically interjects.

The Reserve sawmill site is owned by Catron County and leased to the Catron County Citizens Group. Using rural economic development grant monies received by the Citizens Group, the Wood Business Center (a business that oversees sawmill administration and operations) is creating markets and enticing others to utilize the wood products to produce more industry. Local area businessmen Jim Cooke, Bob Fisher and Ben Marlin have found markets for the mill bi-products i.e. bark, firewood, wood chips and sawdust and envision a gain by the mill.



Thinning operations at the Gila National Forest, N.M.

With timber harvesting significantly diminished in the early 1990's, many Catron County residents were faced with having to leave their homes to look for work elsewhere. "He's home," says Hilda, Kellar's wife.

Hilda continued, saying that since 1992, six to 20 county citizens left for three to four weeks at a time and would come home for only four to five days. When Catron County residents are able to stay in their homes and be gainfully employed, this is a great accomplishment and brings a happy smile to many faces