

Burro Mountain Rx and Thinning Projects

Proposed Action

**Silver City Ranger District
Gila National Forest**

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The objective of the project is to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire while protecting water quality into the future by improving watershed condition, and reducing fuel loading. A combination of thinning and prescribed burning is proposed to accomplish this objective. Mangas Valley, Corral Canyon, and the Thompson Canyon watersheds are within these project areas.

The proposed action calls for thinning of approximately 7,000 acres and 66,785 acres in prescribed burning. There are a total of 9 Prescribed Burning (Rx) projects in the Burro Mountain area. These projects include the Willow, Mulberry, Bar Six, Cherokee, Wildhorse, Silverdale, Bullard Peak, Schoolhouse, and Harris Rx. There are 3 projects that include Bar Six, Willow, and Mulberry which will incorporate thinning. In these project areas thinning will be accomplished using mechanical and/or hand thinning (see attached map).

Thinning and burning could start as early as spring 2012 and is expected to last several years before completion. The first thinning project identified will be in the Bar Six area and will take up to 5 years to complete. After Bar Six is complete we will move to the Mulberry and Willow thinning areas. Over a 10 year period the objective will be to thin 700 acres per year at \$300 per acre, and a prescribed burning target of 6,600 acres at \$70 to \$100 dollars per acre per year. To reach the desired thinning and burning objectives it will be dependant upon weather and proper fuel conditions prior to implementation, therefore the project could take up to 10 years to complete.

Thinning will take place in ponderosa pine, pinyon and juniper stands, and will be accomplished using methods such as mechanical and/or hand thinning. Prescribed fire will take place in each of the project areas as broadcast burns (the entire area) using hand ignition and aerial methods. By accomplishing burning and thinning in these areas it will improve the Burro Mountain area to its historic state of a grassland type ecosystem.