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Governor

Office of the State Forester

Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management



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Tribal Outreach and Activities Annual Report 2021

Agency Overview

The Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM), in partnership with local, county, state, tribal and federal agencies, protects Arizona's people by providing technical assistance through forestry programs; facilitating forest restoration; managing and suppressing wildland fire; sharing knowledge to promote fire prevention; and ensuring fire and life safety through regular building inspections, permitting, and plan reviews.

Tribal Collaboration

DFFM collaborates with tribal entities during the fire season while managing active fires, and year-round to promote dialog, mutual understanding and the pursuit of shared objectives. This engagement encourages sensitivity for tribal sovereign rights and culture. DFFM's Forestry programs offer tribes grant funding for hazardous vegetation removal, invasive plant treatment, and wildfire prevention and suppression. The State Fire Marshal's office responds to tribal entities and conducts inspections in tribal communities when invited to do so.

Tribal Notification

For all projects that DFFM conducts on Arizona State Trust Land, DFFM consults with tribes whose interests may be affected. Since the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) is ultimately responsible for activities that occur on State Trust Land, DFFM collaborates with ASLD and ASLD takes the lead in tribal notification and consultation.

Tribal Interactions

DFFM's guiding document is the 2020 Forest Action Plan (FAP). Goals and objectives in the 2020 FAP that pertain to tribal interactions, and activities related to the goals and objectives that have taken place in State Fiscal Year 2020, are listed below.

Duty □ **Respect** □ **Integrity**

| Tribal Interactions | | |
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| Goal | Objective | Activity |
| Minimize negative human impacts to trees and forests. | Objective 2. Develop and maintain education materials, programs, and outreach to increase awareness of available tools to address threats. | The Fire Marshal's Office initiated the development of a Community Risk Reduction (CRR) plan to identify and prioritize local risks in the Ak-Chin, Colorado River and White Mountain Apache communities. |
| Same as above. | Objective 5: Focus efforts in priority landscapes and areas that have been historically underserved. | The Forestry Division initiated the development of a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) to reduce fuels and enhance watershed on White Mountain Apache land. |
| Resilient and diverse forest ecosystem structures, processes, and functions. | Objective 1: Protect, conserve and enhance ecological integrity to maintain healthy forest ecosystems, preserve ecosystem services, avoid public safety hazards, and negative watershed impacts associated with large-scale catastrophic events. | The Forestry Division engaged the Hualapai Tribe to plan a fuels break between their land and adjacent federal land. |
| Same as above. | Objective 3: Identify and conserve unique high priority ecosystems and landscapes for accelerated treatments. | The Forestry Division initiated an RCPP with White Mountain Apache (see above), helped Hualapai plan a fuels break (see above) and provided a letter of support for the San Carlos Apache Tribe's nomination for the USFS 2021 Smokey Bear Award. |
| Same as above. | Objective 4: Identify and monitor threats to forest ecosystem health that would require accelerated treatments | The Forestry Division initiated an RCPP with White Mountain Apache (see above) and helped Hualapai plan a fuels break (see above). |
| Progress toward landscape scale outcomes, restoration of unhealthy ecosystems, and enhanced sustainability with limited negative impacts | Objective 1: Restore forests, deserts and grasslands impacted by current fire regimes, insect & disease outbreaks, land management practices/uses, and invasive species. | The Forestry Division assembled stakeholders (including tribes) and facilitated the first meeting of the Arizona Forest Stewardship Council. |
| Improve and maintain watershed health and watershed function statewide. | Objective 1: Protect and enhance water quality and quantity of priority watersheds through enhanced resiliency and sustainability. | The Forestry Division initiated an RCPP with White Mountain Apache (see above). |
| "Fire Adapted Communities" that provide shared stakeholder responsibility for resilient landscapes and wildfire prepared communities. | Objective 1: Assist communities in planning for and reducing wildfire risks | The Fire Marshal's Office helped update Hualapai Nation and Mohave Valley Fire District's National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) account. |
| Improved communication between all land management agencies, indigenous tribes, and other cultural groups about varying perspectives and beliefs related to forests, trees, and other natural resources. | Objective 1: Build trust, communication networks, and problem-solving strategies between land management agencies, communities, and stakeholders about the diverse cultural perspectives of forest users and Indigenous Tribes. | The Forestry Division developed plans to engage firefighters from the Hualapai Tribe to conduct hazardous fuels reduction work and provided a letter of support for the San Carlos Apache Tribe (see above), the Fire Marshal's Office inspected three schools in tribal communities (two Diné and one White Mountain Apache) throughout the State. |
| Effective collaboration mechanisms for sharing of information about resources, priorities, policies, and management strategies between Tribes and non-Tribal organizations. | Objective 2: Improve information sharing about available resources to address needs of indigenous tribes and other Cultural groups in Arizona. | The Forestry Division prepared to engage the Hualapai fuels crew (see above), The Fire Marshal's Office initiated a CRR program with three Arizona tribes (see above). |

Highlights: In State Fiscal Year 2020, DFFM engaged tribal partners to:

- participate in a State Forest Stewardship Council,
- develop initiatives to improve forest and watershed health and to reduce wildfire risk,
- employ tribal members and invigorate timber harvest and sale,
- inspect schools for fire hazards, to improve emergency services, and
- identify and prioritize local risks on tribal land.

Recommendations from Tribal representatives:

- simplify the process for directly contracting tribal entities to serve as contractors/vendors for the State

Revisions to Tribal Consultation Policy:

- none

Challenges:

- engaging tribal fuels crews to conduct State-funded fuel reduction and forest health improvement projects

For questions or more information, please contact:

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