

NORTH SCHELL'S/WARD MOUNTAIN RESTORATION PROJECT
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Ely Ranger District
Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Proposal
White Pine County, Nevada

PROPOSED TREATMENTS

Background

Early in 2007 the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest funded the Ely Ranger District in cooperation with the Nature Conservancy to conduct a landscape assessment on the northern portions of the Schell Creek Mountain Range. In December of 2007 the Forest proposed the North Schell Restoration Project for funding under Round 9 of the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA). In 2008 the North Schell Project was funded for approximately 1.3 million dollars to complete the NEPA analysis and begin treatments within the 78,000 acre analysis area.

Also in December of 2007 the Ely Ranger District in cooperation with the Ely District of the Bureau of Land Management and the Ely Shoshone Tribe developed and submitted for funding the Ward Mountain Restoration Project. This project was also funded in Round 9 of SNPLMA and involved contracting with the Nature Conservancy to complete an assessment on 120,000 acres which 40,000 acres are on National Forest system lands and the remaining acres are BLM, and Tribal Lands. The Ely BLM District is the lead agency on this landscape assessment project.

In October of 2008 the Ely Ranger District submitted the Ward Mountain Restoration Project for funding under SNPLMA to complete the NEPA analysis and begin implementation of treatments. Funding for this proposal was also approved. This funding is sufficient to complete the NEPA analysis and surveys and may provide limited funds for treatments.

In 2009 the Lowry Hazardous Fuels Project treated approximately 300 acres of pinyon-juniper using a masticator. These treatments occurred on National Forest lands within the urban interface around the City of Ely. An additional 700 acres of treatment are planned for the summer of 2010 and another 500 acres the summer of 2011. These projects are within the boundary of the Ward Mountain project area. This proposal builds on these treatments and really takes the program to a landscape scale.

In February of 2009 the Ely Ranger District signed a decision on a Travel Management plan for the District. This plan regulates motor vehicle use within both the North Schell and Ward Mountain project areas. A travel map has been printed and plans are currently being developed to rehabilitate unauthorized roads and trails.

During the spring of 2009 an interdisciplinary team from the Ely, Austin and Tonopah Ranger Districts met to discuss the need to plan and implement landscape level projects to treat and/or restore vegetation communities, wildlife habitats, watersheds and reduce fuels where

appropriate. As part of that meeting the entire Ely Ranger District was divided into a series of landscape scale planning units ranging from 40,000 acres to 200,000 acres. The first two priority landscapes are the North Schell's and Ward Mountain where work had already began and funding was available.

Location

The North Schell Restoration Project area is approximately 78,000 acres in size and is located on the northern portions of the Schell Creek Mountain Range in east central Nevada. The project area is approximately 20 miles north-east of Ely, Nevada. The project area contains primarily National Forest System Lands with approximately 1,500 acres of scattered private in-holdings.

The Ward Mountain Restoration Project area is approximately 120,000 acres in size and is also located in east central Nevada immediately south and west of the City of Ely. The project area contains approximately 40,000 acres of National Forest System lands, 71,600 acres of BLM lands, 5,900 acres of private land and 2,500 acres of tribal lands. This project area contains significant acres of urban interface and also includes the municipal watershed for the City of Ely.

Current Project Status

The Landscape Assessment for the North Schell Restoration Project was completed by The Nature Conservancy in May of 2008. The North Schell Project was provided to the public in June of 2009 for the initial public scoping process. The District is currently preparing specialist reports and a Notice of Proposed Action which will be released for public comment in early to mid May of 2010. A Decision on this project is expected in early October of 2010. Treatments are being planned for the fall of 2010 or the spring of 2011.

The Ward Mountain landscape assessment was initiated in June of 2009 by the Nature Conservancy under contract through the BLM. The landscape assessment will be completed by the end of June 2010. Following the completion of that assessment the Ely Ranger District and the Ely BLM District are planning to develop a proposed action and initiate a joint NEPA planning effort to approve restoration efforts within the landscape project area. A Decision on the treatments for Forest Service lands should be issued on or before October 1, 2011.

Proposed Treatments

The North Schell project will treat up to 35,000 acres of vegetation within a larger landscape. Vegetation treatments will include a mix of both mechanical as well as prescribed fire and fire for resource benefit. A variety of mechanical treatment methods will focus on pinyon-juniper communities to restore other vegetative communities such as sagebrush-grasslands, mountain mahogany, and mountain shrub communities. Other associated actions will include the inventory and treatment of noxious weeds and the closure and rehabilitation of unauthorized roads and motorized trails. The following is a summary of the proposed treatments and objectives within the North Schell analysis area:

- Fuelwood harvest or biomass removal will be implemented within pinyon-juniper communities and may include commercial fuelwood sales, stewardship contracts, personal use fuelwood harvest or other appropriate methods. These treatments will be focused where road access exists, near private lands and will be used to restore wildlife habitats, restore vegetation communities and reduce fuels.
- Service contracts using masticators or similar equipment will be used to treat pinyon-juniper where removal of products is either not appropriate or not feasible.
- Use of chainsaws to do individual tree selection cuts will be done in a variety of areas primarily to improve and protect important wildlife habitats. This will include cutting younger pinyon-juniper trees from sagebrush communities to restore sage grouse habitats and critical mule deer winter ranges. Individual tree removal will also be used to maintain mountain mahogany communities which are very important for wildlife species.
- Prescribed fire treatments will focus on restoring aspen communities which are being lost to white fir, treating and maintaining stable aspen communities and increasing diversity within mountain sagebrush and mountain shrub communities. Prescribed fire will also be used in association with some mechanical treatments to reduce fuels and also to treat some pinyon-juniper communities where mechanical treatments are not feasible.
- Fire for resource benefit is currently approved for use within the project area and will be used as a treatment tool as opportunities present themselves.
- Inventories and treatments for noxious weeds will be implemented throughout the project area both before and after treatments. Noxious weeds that are present include musk thistle, Canada thistle, hoary cress, spotted and Russian knapweed. Noxious weed infestations are generally less than 1 acre in size and occur infrequently across the landscape.
- Implementation of the Districts travel management plan will be ongoing and as part of this restoration project numerous unauthorized roads will be physically closed and rehabilitated to restore the appropriate vegetative communities and watershed function.

The Landscape Assessment for the Ward Mountain Restoration Project is in the process of being completed. At this stage the proposed action and treatment needs have not fully been developed. Currently there is no formal proposal for the number of acres that will be treated on Forest Service administered lands. Based on knowledge of the area and past experiences with similar projects we are estimating that between 10,000 to 20,000 acres will likely need treatments. Many of the treatments will be similar to what is planned for the North Schell Project Area. The Ward Mountain Project Area is unique, however, because it contains a significant amount of urban interface, has better road access and is right next to Ely, which makes utilization of products much more economical. The following is a summary of what to expect for treatments in the Ward Mountain Project Area:

- Fuelwood harvest or biomass removal will be implemented within pinyon-juniper communities and may include commercial fuelwood sales, stewardship contracts, personal use fuelwood harvest or other appropriate methods.
- Service contracts using masticators or similar equipment will be used to treat pinyon-juniper where removal of products is either not appropriate or not feasible.
- Use of chainsaws to do individual tree selection cuts may be done in a variety of areas primarily to improve and protect important wildlife habitats. This would include cutting younger pinyon-juniper trees from sagebrush communities to restore sage grouse habitats and critical mule deer winter ranges. Individual tree removal will also be used to maintain mountain mahogany communities which are very important for wildlife species.
- Prescribed fire treatments will be somewhat limited compared to the North Schell Project Area. These treatments will focus on restoring aspen communities which are being lost to white fir and increasing diversity within mountain sagebrush and mountain shrub communities. Prescribed fire will also be used in association with some mechanical treatments to reduce fuels and also to treat some pinyon-juniper communities where mechanical treatments are not feasible.
- Fire for resource benefit is not currently approved for use within this project area due to urban interface issues.
- Inventories and treatments for noxious weeds will be implemented throughout the project area both before and after treatments. Noxious weeds that are present include hoary cress, spotted and Russian knapweed. Noxious weed infestations are less than 1 acre in size and occur very infrequently across the landscape.
- Implementation of the Districts travel management plan will be ongoing and as part of this restoration project numerous unauthorized roads will be physically closed and rehabilitated to restore the appropriate vegetative communities and watershed function.

The primary goals of these restoration projects are to improve and restore vegetation communities, improve and restore important wildlife habitats, improve watershed conditions, and reduce fuels.

Monitoring

The Ely Ranger District is currently coordinating with the Nature Conservancy to conduct vegetation monitoring in the project area both pre and post treatment to determine the success of the treatments. Monitoring in the project areas will be done by both the Nature Conservancy and by Forest Service personnel and will include a variety of vegetation transects, photo points, and site visits with cooperators.

ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Vegetation

The North Schell and Ward Mountain Restoration Project areas contain a variety of vegetation communities that range in elevation from 6,500 feet to 10,000 feet in elevation. The following is a summary of the primary vegetation communities and how the proposed treatments will affect each of those communities:

Pinyon-Juniper

Pinyon-juniper communities make up the largest vegetative community on the landscape. Pinyon-juniper is classified into three types of communities. Phase I pinyon-juniper are present but shrubs and herbs are the dominant vegetation and Phase II pinyon-juniper are co-dominant with shrubs and herbs, and all three vegetation layers influences the ecological processes. Phase III pinyon-juniper are dominate vegetation and the primary plant layer influencing ecological processes on the sites. Phase III pinyon-juniper are areas that have past a threshold and cannot easily be restored. These areas also include mature pinyon-juniper woodlands.

Treatments in pinyon-juniper will focus in the phase I & II communities with an objective to restore these areas to sagebrush/grassland and mountain shrub communities. Treatments will generally avoid phase III areas except where it is determined that restoration can be achieved economically and in a reasonable time period. Pinyon-juniper treatments will be implemented using mechanical methods and to a lesser extent with prescribed fire. The pinyon-juniper treatment areas provide the greatest potential for utilization of products.

Aspen

Aspen communities make up only a small portion of the total acres on the landscape; however, they are one of the most important communities for a variety of reasons. Aspen stands are divided into two categories. Stable aspen stands are pure aspen stands that do not contain conifers. Seral aspen stands either contain conifers or have the potential to be dominated by conifers as the stands age. Seral aspen stands in the project area have been significantly impacted by fire suppression and past grazing practices. These stands are often at imminent risk for being lost on the landscape without a disturbance such as fire. Prescribed fire treatments will be focused on seral aspen stands at a landscape scale to regenerate those stands and reduce the white fir dominance.

Stable aspen stands have also been impacted by past livestock grazing and to a lesser extent fire suppression. These stands are not as high of a priority as the seral stands, however, a number of these stands will be treated with fire as part of the treatments in mountain big sagebrush and mountain shrub communities at the higher elevations. These treatments will help to regenerate and possibly expand these stable aspen stands.

Sagebrush/Grasslands and Mountain Shrub

Sagebrush/grasslands and mountain shrub make up the second largest vegetation communities in the project areas. Treatments in these communities will use prescribed fire to increase both vegetation and age class diversity. Treatments will also focus in areas where pinyon-juniper is expanding upon this community type. Treatments will occur in a mosaic pattern to maximize benefits to wildlife species such as sage grouse, mule deer, and other sagebrush dependent species.

Mountain Mahogany

Treatments within mountain mahogany communities will focus on the selective cutting of pinyon-juniper trees to maintain the mahogany habitats which are important to wildlife.

Wildlife

Both project areas provide habitats for a wide range of wildlife species which include sage grouse (Forest Service sensitive species) and other sagebrush dependent species, mule deer (MIS Species and economically important), elk (economically important), and numerous other species. One of the primary goals/objectives of this project is the restoration of important wildlife habitats, in particular, the restoration of sagebrush/grasslands and aspen habitats.

Watershed and Water Quality

Historical fire suppression, past grazing practices and other activities such as the proliferation of roads has affected watersheds on these landscapes. As vegetation changes have occurred, this has likely increased erosion, decreased water flows within springs and streams, and impacted the ability of watersheds to function properly. These treatments will be implemented in ways that will minimize the short term effects to water quality, while in the long term there will be a reduction in sedimentation, maintenance or improvements in spring and stream flows, and more resilient watersheds. The rehabilitation of unauthorized roads and trails will also restore watershed function and reduce erosion into streams.

Invasive Species Management

Noxious weeds, as mentioned previously, are present within the project areas at very low densities. Under this proposal aggressive actions will be implemented to inventory, locate, and eradicate noxious weed infestations within the project areas. Treatment areas will be monitored closely to prevent infestation by noxious weeds.

Cheatgrass is a considerable concern in many areas in the western United States. Cheatgrass is present in low densities, primarily along roadways and on some southern exposures in the project areas. Treatments will generally avoid areas with cheatgrass or treatments will be implemented to control infestations of this invasive species. Although cheatgrass infestations are always a concern, it has not been a serious problem on most of the Ely Ranger District

primarily due to the high elevations and healthier native understory vegetation communities at those elevations.

Road Management

As was previously discussed, there is a current travel management plan in place for the project areas. This project will provide some funding for the rehabilitation of unauthorized roads and trails to restore native vegetation communities, restore wildlife habitats and improve watershed conditions.

Mechanical treatments in the pinyon-juniper vegetative communities may require road maintenance on existing approved roads and will also require off-road travel in approved areas during treatments. There are no plans for the construction of either permanent or temporary roads associated with these treatments. Disturbed areas where equipment is used off roads may be rehabilitated and seeded with native seed mixes as needed.

COLLABORATION

Currently this project does not have a formalized collaboration group. The following is a summary of the collaboration efforts to this point:

- The Forest Service has been working closely with the Nature Conservancy (TNC) since 2007 conducting landscape Assessments for both project areas. Currently the Nature Conservancy is leading the effort on the Ward Mountain Assessment. Cooperators in this effort include the Forest Service, BLM, Ely Shoshone Tribe, Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) and others.
- The Forest Service has worked closely with livestock permittees in developing these projects. Hank Vogler has been a primary supporter of this effort.
- The Forest Service have been in discussions with some of the private land owners that are intersted in the proposed treatments on Forest Service lands adjacent to their lands and also treatments on their property's.
- The Forest Service has been in close discussions with NDOW on the projects and has held field visits to discuss proposed treatments. NDOW strongly supports the proposed treatments.
- For the past year the Forest has been meeting with the RMEF and is currently working to develop an agreement and potential stewardship opportunities with RMEF on the North Schell portion of the project. RMEF has also indicated an interest in providing leadership to develop a formalized "collaboration or advisory group" for this project.
- The Forest Service has been working with landowners to identify opportunities and work out any potential concerns.
- The Forest Service has discussed this project with the White Pine County Commissioners, Public Land Use Advisory Committee (PLUAC), Tri-County Coordination Group, Coordinated Resource Management Committee and other local leadership. Each of these groups has been strongly supportive of the projects.

WILDFIRE

Over the past 50 years wildfires have not played an active role in either the North Schell or Ward Mountain project areas. During this time frame wildfires have been aggressively suppressed. Also during this time period vegetation communities have matured and fuel loads have increased substantially. Fires have occurred in both project areas; however they have generally been 1 acre or less with very few fires exceeding 100 acres. Both project areas are at considerable risk for stand replacement, catastrophic fires. The Ward Mountain project area is of considerable concern as a result of the heavy and continuous live fuels within the pinyon-juniper stands that are immediately adjacent to the City of Ely and its municipal water supply.

The North Schell project area is currently approved for the use of wildand fire for resource benefits and in the coming years the District will undoubtedly take advantage of this management tool. Once treatments are completed in the area and vegetation communities are restored, then opportunities to use fire for resource benefits in the North Schell to maintain a natural balance will increase substantially.

Within the Ward Mountain project area, managing fires for resource benefits is currently not approved as a result of the significant risks and the close proximity to wildland urban interface. Following implementation of treatments in this area, the decision not to allow fires for resource benefits may be revisited, however, these decisions would be approached with great caution. Following treatments in the area there would be greater opportunities to manage fires for reduced suppression costs. Long term, within both project areas, wildfires on this landscape would be of lower severity and have significantly fewer risks to fire fighters, the community, inholdings and other resources.

UTILIZATION

Mechanical treatments within both the North Schell and Ward Mountain Project areas would produce considerable opportunities for utilization of pinyon-juniper biomass/products. Currently the opportunities include the Fuels for Schools program which has limited biomass needs and commercial/personal use fuelwood harvest. The Ely area has a wood pellet facility which is currently not operational due to production issues and challenges. There is a great deal of discussion occurring regarding numerous opportunities; however, those ideas have not materialized so far. Development of economically feasible opportunities such as wood pellet facilities, expanded fuelwood markets, bio-char, or electrical generation units will be critical to the utilization of pinyon-juniper biomass/products.

INVESTMENTS

There are no anticipated federal investments needed within or adjacent to either project areas. There are no plans for road construction and no planned developments of any kind. There is a need for private investments on private lands to fully and effectively utilize biomass or wood

products from the treatment areas. Re-energizing the existing wood pellet facility or development of other similar operations will be key.

The proposed treatments will create considerable opportunities for job creation in the County. Numerous local and regional contractors have expressed interest in working on these projects. There are also opportunities for seasonal employment to implement the prescribed fire treatments. The potential utilization of wood products will contribute to commercial fuelwood operations, wood pellet operations or other similar enterprises all of which will create job opportunities.

FUNDING ESTIMATE

Funds to be used on NFS lands for ecological restoration treatments and monitoring that would be available in FY 2010 to match funding from the Collaborative Forested Landscape Restoration Fund	
Fiscal Year 2010 Funding Type	Dollars/Value Planned
FY 2010 Funding for Implementation (not including CFLRP match)	\$400,000
FY 2010 Funding for Monitoring (not including CFLRP match)	\$28,000
1. USFS Appropriated Funds (Travel Management Implementation)	\$10,000
2. USFS Permanent & Trust Funds	\$0
3. Partnership Funds	\$0
4. Partnership In-Kind Services Value	\$0
5. Estimated Forest Product Value	\$0
6. Other (specify) SNPLMA-Weeds and pre-treatment monitoring	\$20,000
ARRA (Lowry Fuels Treatments)	\$317,700
FY 2010 Total (total of 1-6 above for matching CFLRP request)	\$347,000
FY 2010 CFLRP request (must be equal to or less than above total)	\$30,000
Funding off NFS lands associated with proposal in FY 2010 (does not count toward funding match from the Collaborative Forested Landscape Restoration Fund)	
Fiscal Year 2010 Funding Type	Dollars Planned
USDI BLM Funds	NA
USDI (other) Funds	NA
Other Public Funding	NA
Private Funding	NA

Funds to be used on NFS lands for ecological restoration treatments and monitoring that would be available in FY 2011 to match funding from the Collaborative Forested Landscape Restoration Fund	
Fiscal Year 2011 Funding Type	Dollars/Value Planned
FY 2011 Funding for Implementation (not including CFLRP match)	\$500,000
FY 2011 Funding for Monitoring (not including CFLRP match)	\$28,000
1. USFS Appropriated Funds (Prescribed Fire, Travel Management, Monitoring) (Will include salary contribution)	\$80,000
2. USFS Permanent & Trust Funds	\$0
3. Partnership Funds (RMEF and others - Estimated)	\$75,000
4. Partnership In-Kind Services Value (RMEF and others - Estimated)	\$5,000
5. Estimated Forest Product Value	\$5,000

6. Other (specify) SNPLMA (multiple codes)(Stewardship Contracting, Weeds, Prescribed Fire)	\$275,000
SNPLMA Lowry Treatments	\$165,000
FY 2011 Total (total of 1-6 above for matching CFLRP request)	\$605,000
FY 2011 CFLRP request (must be equal to or less than above total)	\$500,000
Funding off NFS lands associated with proposal in FY 2011 (does not count toward funding match from the Collaborative Forested Landscape Restoration Fund)	
Fiscal Year 2011 Funding Type	Dollars Planned
USDI BLM Funds	NA
USDI (other) Funds	NA
Other Public Funding	NA
Private Funding	NA

Funds to be used on NFS lands for ecological restoration treatments and monitoring that would be available in FY 2012 to match funding from the Collaborative Forested Landscape Restoration Fund	
Fiscal Year 2012 Funding Type	Dollars/Value Planned
FY 2012 Funding for Implementation (not including CFLRP match)	\$450,000
FY 2012 Funding for Monitoring (not including CFLRP match)	\$28,000
1. USFS Appropriated Funds (Prescribed Fire, Travel Management, Monitoring) (Will include salary contribution)	\$80,000
2. USFS Permanent & Trust Funds	\$0
3. Partnership Funds (RMEF and others - Estimated)	\$85,000
4. Partnership In-Kind Services Value (RMEF and others - Estimated)	\$15,000
5. Estimated Forest Product Value	\$20,000
6. Other (specify) SNPLMA (multiple codes)(Stewardship Contracting, Weeds, Prescribed Fire)	\$275,000
SNPLMA Lowry Treatments	\$165,000
FY 2012 Total (total of 1-6 above for matching CFLRP request)	\$640,000
FY 2012 CFLRP request (must be equal to or less than above total)	\$500,000
Funding off NFS lands associated with proposal in FY 2010 (does not count toward funding match from the Collaborative Forested Landscape Restoration Fund)	
Fiscal Year 2012 Funding Type	Dollars Planned
USDI BLM Funds	NA
USDI (other) Funds	NA
Other Public Funding	NA
Private Funding	NA

Funds to be used on NFS lands for ecological restoration treatments and monitoring that would be available in FY 2013 to match funding from the Collaborative Forested Landscape Restoration Fund	
Fiscal Year 2013 Funding Type	Dollars/Value Planned
FY 2013 Funding for Implementation (not including CFLRP match)	\$575,000
FY 2013 Funding for Monitoring (not including CFLRP match)	\$20,000
1. USFS Appropriated Funds (Travel Management Implementation)	\$100,000
2. USFS Permanent & Trust Funds	\$0
3. Partnership Funds (RMEF and others - Estimated)	\$85,000

4. Partnership In-Kind Services Value (RMEF and others - Estimated)	\$15,000
5. Estimated Forest Product Value	\$20,000
6. Other (specify) SNPLMA (multiple codes)(Stewardship Contracting, Weeds, Prescribed Fire)	\$275,000
FY 2013 Total (total of 1-6 above for matching CFLRP request)	\$595,000
FY 2013 CFLRP request (must be equal to or less than above total)	\$500,000
Funding off NFS lands associated with proposal in FY 2013 (does not count toward funding match from the Collaborative Forested Landscape Restoration Fund)	
Fiscal Year 2013 Funding Type	Dollars Planned
USDI BLM Funds	NA
USDI (other) Funds	NA
Other Public Funding	NA
Private Funding	NA

Funds to be used on NFS lands for ecological restoration treatments and monitoring that would be available in FY 2014 to match funding from the Collaborative Forested Landscape Restoration Fund	
Fiscal Year 2014 Funding Type	Dollars/Value Planned
FY 2014 Funding for Implementation (not including CFLRP match)	\$355,000
FY 2014 Funding for Monitoring (not including CFLRP match)	\$20,000
1. USFS Appropriated Funds (Travel Management Implementation)	\$120,000
2. USFS Permanent & Trust Funds	\$0
3. Partnership Funds (RMEF and others - Estimated)	\$100,000
4. Partnership In-Kind Services Value (RMEF and others - Estimated)	\$15,000
5. Estimated Forest Product Value	\$20,000
6. Other (specify) SNPLMA-Weeds and pre-treatment monitoring	\$120,000
FY 2014 Total (total of 1-6 above for matching CFLRP request)	\$375,000
FY 2014 CFLRP request (must be equal to or less than above total)	\$350,000
Funding off NFS lands associated with proposal in FY 2013 (does not count toward funding match from the Collaborative Forested Landscape Restoration Fund)	
Fiscal Year 2014 Funding Type	Dollars Planned
USDI BLM Funds	NA
USDI (other) Funds	NA
Other Public Funding	NA
Private Funding	NA

FUNDING PLAN

The development of this project is utilizing funding from a variety of both federal and non-federal sources. The Forest will be using funds approved through the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) to complete the planning and a portion of the vegetation treatments within the project areas as well as fund vegetation monitoring by The Nature Conservancy. SNPLMA funding will also be used to treat noxious weeds within the approved areas of each project. Within appropriated funds, WFHF and NFWF funds will be used in out-years to fund some treatments. NFRG and NFWF funds will be contributed to manage livestock

grazing following treatments and to monitor vegetation in the area. Limited NFRW and CMRD funds may be contributed to implement travel management and rehabilitate unauthorized roads. Out-year multi-party monitoring will be implemented and will include other agencies such as the Nevada Department of Wildlife as well as other partners such as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is currently in negotiations with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to enter into a partnership/Stewardship Agreement to implement treatments on this project. Other partnership funds will also be requested.

OTHER FUNDING

The following is a summary of committed partners and/or potential funding sources:

- Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA)
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF)
- Ely District BLM
- Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Livestock Permittees

This next summary contains potential partners and/or potential funding sources:

- Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition (ENLC)
- Mule Deer Foundation
- Ely Shoshone Tribe
- White Pine County
- Private Landowners
- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) (EQUIP funding)
- Cooperative Weed Management Areas

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

During the spring of 2009 an interdisciplinary team from the Ely, Austin and Tonopah Ranger Districts met to discuss the need to plan and implement landscape level projects to treat and/or restore vegetation communities, wildlife habitats, watersheds and reduce fuels where appropriate. As part of that meeting the entire Ely Ranger District was divided into a series of landscape scale planning units ranging from 40,000 acres to 200,000 acres. The first two priority landscapes are the North Schell's and Ward Mountain where work had already begun and funding was available. The following is a broad outline of the Districts strategy for addressing landscape scale treatments far into the future.

- North Schell Restoration Project (78,000 acres); NEPA will be completed in October of 2010 and implementation will begin in the fall of 2010 or the spring of 2011. Treatments will occur over a 5-10 year period dependent upon funding.

- Ward Mountain Restoration Project (40,000 acres); NEPA will be completed in October of 2011 and implementation will begin in the fall of 2011 or the spring of 2012. Treatments will occur over a 5-10 year period dependent upon funding.
- Mount Moriah Restoration Project (120,000 acres); NEPA will be completed in May of 2013 and implementation will begin in the fall of 2013 or the spring of 2014. Treatments will occur over a 5-10 year period dependent upon funding.
- The South Schell Restoration Project (200,000 acres); NEPA will be completed in May of 2014 and implementation will begin in the fall of 2014 or the spring of 2015. Treatments will occur over a 5-10 year period dependent upon funding.

The following is a summary of priorities and proposed treatments for the North Schell and Ward Mountain Project Areas:

- During FY 2010 inventory and pretreatment of noxious weeds will occur within both project areas.
- Also in FY 2010 the District would begin implementing its travel management plan and rehabilitation of unauthorized roads would begin.
- In 2010 the NEPA analysis would be completed for vegetation treatments within the North Schell Project Area.
- In 2010 the landscape Assessment will be completed for the Ward Mountain Project area and NEPA would be initiated.
- Finally, in 2010 the collaborative group will be formalized and an agreement completed with RMEF.
- Treatments will begin in the fall of 2010 or the spring of 2011 and extend for approximately 5-10 years dependent upon funding. The following are the priorities for vegetation treatments in both areas:
 - 1) Treatments in Phase I and II pinyon-juniper to restore sagebrush/grasslands, mountain shrub communities, and to reduce fuels near urban interface.
 - 2) Treatments in Seral aspen to reduce white fir dominance and regenerate aspen communities.
 - 3) Treatments in mountain sagebrush and mountain shrub communities to increase vegetative and age class diversity.
 - 4) Treatments in stable aspen to regenerate aspen stands.
 - 5) Treatments in mountain mahogany to remove pinyon-juniper encroachment and maintain the mahogany stands.

MAPS