

Cimarron Watershed Alliance
Project Proposal

PROJECT NAME: Ute Creek Tributary, Tree Thinning—Express Ranch

OBJECTIVE OF PROJECT: To enhance the quality and quantity of water in the Ute Creek (a major tributary of the Cimarron River in the Cimarron Watershed) with side benefits of fire mitigation and wildlife habitat improvement.

SITE, LOCATION AND ACRES TREATED: The proposed 3 year project will be on the Express Ranch on County Road B13, north of Highway 64 near Ute Park, New Mexico. We estimate treating about 300-400 acres over the three-year proposed project period.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The scope of work will entail clearing small diameter trees (mostly Juniper, Pinon and scrub oaks) which have encroached into parks in the Ute Creek tributary drainage of the Cimarron Watershed. Water quantity will be increased through eliminating thousands of small diameter and scrub trees each of which can use up to several gallons of water per day. Water quality is improved because native grasses thrive when the trees are removed and which thus, diminishes erosion. Ladder fuels (lower limbs) are trimmed from larger trees during the operations that helps mitigate forest fire propagation danger and makes for much improved wildlife habit.

The proposed project is an extension of an identical self-funded program, which has been underway for 5 years on the Express Ranch and has proved to be quite effective. The clearing is done with chain saws, the slash placed in ravines (washes or arroyos) to help with erosion control and the surplus stacked and burned during times of extreme low fire danger.

COST: (Include Grant, Matching In-Kind & Matching Dollars): A grant of \$18,000.00 per year for three years is proposed. The 40% (\$12,000.00) per year will be matching dollars. Of the total \$25,200.00 per year, \$24,000.00 per year is planned to be spent on wages and salaries in the local labor market and the balance going to local businesses for chain saw maintenance, repairs, supplies, etc.

SCHEDULE AND TIMELINE: It is proposed for the project to commence about April 1, 2005 and continue for 3 years.

TEAM LEADER AND PARTICIPANTS: The team leader will be R. Frank Atmore, along with John Atmore, co-manager of the New Mexico Express Ranch. Other participants will be hired-workers form the local labor market.

PERMISSIONS AND PERMITTING: The land, water rights and mineral rights are owned by Express Ranch and so no permissions are required. Additionally, no land will be disturbed and so no Dredge and Fill Clearance or Cultural Resource Clearance is needed.