

Blue Ridge Demonstration Project

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

Lakeside Ranger District

The Blue Ridge Demonstration Project compares three forest management strategies or prescriptions with a control area on a landscape near Lakeside, Arizona. The prescriptions focus on restoring forest ecosystem diversity, productivity, and stability. Fire suppression for most of the 20th century greatly increased the survival of trees within many Arizona ponderosa pine forests. This greatly increased the competition among trees as their numbers increased resulting in a closed canopy. Commonly the trees have greatly arrested growth rates and very few grasses, herbs, or shrubs grow on the forest floor.

The comparison of the prescriptions will be facilitated by placing them in close proximity to each other on a relatively homogenous landscape. A monitoring program will track key environmental effects that result from the treatments.

Current Forest Plan direction directs a focus on the harvest of trees to provide for the needs of northern goshawks and their prey base. The northern goshawk represents a predator adapted to forests.

Another restoration prescription has been developed by the Northern Arizona University -- School of Forestry. This endeavors to replicate conditions prevalent in Arizona forests prior to settlement by people of European decent. An open mosaic of tree clumps and meadow characterizes this strategy. The clumps of pine will occupy the deeper soils that developed under a forest canopy.

The Phased Restoration Treatment seeks to thin the forest gradually while leaving older trees as a part of the canopy. "Yellow pine" harvest is precluded and trees under 16 inches in diameter make up the focus of the harvest.

For more information contact Lakeside Ranger District: Telephone (928) 368-5111