



## DFFM District Update: Northeast District A2S

Written by Jon Orona, District Forester and Owen Baertlein, Forestry Technician

---

The Northeast District (A2S) has recently completed a range of projects to improve forest health, restore vegetation communities, and reduce wildfire risk. A2S encompasses Apache, Navajo, and portions of Coconino and Greenlee County. Projects on private, state, and federal lands have created opportunities for collaboration with many different partners and other government agencies.

The recently completed Wolfe-Tillman project is located in the [Chevelon Canyon Wildlife Area](#) and is owned by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission. With funding provided by the [Western Bark Beetle Initiative \(WBBI\) Grant Program](#) through the USDA Forest Service, the project completed thinning treatments to remove bark beetle infested trees, reduce stand density for forest health, and improve wildlife habitat on approximately 50-acres. On private land, the Northeast District in partnership with the [Arizona Community Tree Council](#) completed an additional 14-acres of treatment through the Forest Health Improvement Program (WBBI Funded Grant Project).

The Camp Grace and Tatiyee project in Pinetop-Lakeside continues to progress with nearly 300-acres of treatment completed by Fire and Forestry Department of Correction Crews. Treatments are expected to be completed by Spring 2023.

Lastly, 62-acres of treatment are planned in the West Escudilla project area on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. The purpose of this project is to thin pinyon-juniper woodlands and grassland areas returning them to their historic vegetation communities near Springerville, AZ.

In the coming months, the Northeast District in partnership with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and local industry will begin treatment on the Silver Creek and Y-Fuels project areas, completing grassland restoration and fuels reduction treatments across 4,500 acres of state owned lands.



*Images 1-2: Arizona Game and Fish Commission owned Tillman parcel pre- and post-treatment.*



*Images 3-4: Camp Grace/Tatiyee pre- and post-treatment*

## **In Other News**

In addition to our Forestry Projects and Planning work, the Northeast District assisted the Urban & Community Forestry – [AZ Magnificent Tree Program](#) in late 2022 with visiting Champion Trees (largest of their species) in the Northeast District. These included the nation’s largest [Chihuahua pine](#) (*Pinus leiophylla*) located on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation and one of the largest documented [quaking aspen](#) (*Populus tremuloides*) in Arizona. Unfortunately, the Chihuahua pine was found deceased due to drought and bark beetles; however, a likely new champion was discovered thanks to tribal member Dino Manuel and former BIA Forester Ron Miller.

In other news, the Northeast District partnered with the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Arizona Community Tree Council, Pinetop Fire Department, USDA Forest Service, and DFFM’s Forest Health and Fire Prevention Programs to provide a workshop on [FIREWISE Practices and Forestry Concepts for the White Mountains](#), hosted by the White Mountain Summer Homes HOA. The event was attended by local tree care professionals and arborists as well as community members. Workshop topics varied from basic tree biology to basic chainsaw safety practices.

In closing, the Northeast District looks forward to a safe and productive 2023 and we hope you find time to visit the beautiful White Mountains of eastern Arizona!



*Images 5-6: (Left) Dino Manuel and Ron Miller with the new Champion Chihuahua pine and (Right) Jon Orona (Northeast District Forester) with large quaking aspen.*



*Image 7: Assistant Fire Prevention Officer, Derrick Piper discusses FIREWISE topics at workshop*