

Treatment/Project Area: Price Lakes

rev. 5/19/11

Geographic Area

- Bounded entirely by private land on all sides except for a portion of northern boundary that is in common with the southern end of the South San Juan Wilderness.

Unique Characteristic(s)

- smallest geographic area (of those we're evaluating);
- **nearly surrounded by private;**
- high scenic qualities;
- **limited road access to western third of geographic area where there is substantial warm-dry mixed conifer in proximity to private;**
- one trailhead access point to South San Juan Wilderness;
- **much of area, including the roaded portion, is unstable (slumpy);**
- have a **proactive neighbor** conducting forest restoration on their property (Banded Peaks Ranch)
- one of few places on district with **oil/gas potential.**

Management Challenges

- **limited access to mixed conifer likely in greatest need for treatment** (warm-dry on west) – which coincides with risk to private land from wildland fire;
- much of **roaded access is in area with much slumpy, unstable ground;**
- many closed system roads in fair to poor condition, needing reconstruction prior to any use;
- forest health, current issues: fir broom rust;
- noxious weed infestations (Canada thistle, chamomile).

Management Emphasis/Desired Conditions

- current forest plan:
 - o range mgt; livestock grazing
 - o timber mgt/wood fiber production and utilization
- proposed forest plan:
 - o natural landscapes/limited mgt coupled with "natural processes dominate" (roadless)
 - o active management (generally, timber and range mgt).
- desired conditions:
 - o resilient forest conditions (bugs/crud at endemic levels; diversity in tree composition and size/age classes, etc, aspen restoration)
 - o reduced risk for wildfire in/near WUI;
 - o human-initiated disturbances mimic natural disturbances;

Projects

- on-going range permitting (grazing, cattle);
 - recently, ARRA-funded (fed stimulus \$\$) re-gravelling of Price Lakes Road
 - recently closed/rehabbed Price Lakes wellpad.
- In planning
- none at this time...

Resource Topics

- CWPP – Virtually all of **mixed conifer forest is within WUI for Archuleta County CWPP.**
- Vegetation types –
 - The **roaded/harvested portion** of the Price Lakes area – comprised mostly of cool-moist MC or aspen-with-conifer – was **heavily harvested in the past**, leaving behind a greater proportion of lower-value white fir and aspen, as compared to similar areas on the Pagosa RD (in other words, **high-graded for removal of Doug-fir**).
- Recreation –
 - Moderate to heavy **big-game hunting pressure.**
 - Use levels and types expected to remain consistent with current trends.
- Wildlife-
 - **important elk migration corridor** between South San Juan Wilderness and winter range;
 - **mountain shrubland** habitat, **and wetlands**, important **for fall foraging for black bear**;
 - **greatest concentration of northern leopard frogs** on Pagosa due to wetlands.
- Grazing –
 - One active cattle grazing allotment.
 - Invasive weeds.
- Fuels –
 - **Mountain shrub community** is **dense**, poses a **threat to private land, to south and west** portion of area.
- Watershed –

Opportunities

- **prescribed burning smoke would, during day operations, travel away from developed areas** (towards S. San Juan's) – though would impact portion of Banded Peak Ranch (proactive neighbor);
- given **good neighbor to east, potential for treating across federal/private boundary**;
- **inventory and treat invasive weeds** with emphasis on eradication, control, or containment of infestations