

Making A Difference Chippewa National Forest - Minnesota



New guidelines created under the Healthy Forest Initiative enabled the Chippewa to undertake quick and decisive action against hazardous fuel buildup.

In August 2002, at the height of one of the worst fire seasons the nation had ever experienced, President Bush introduced his Healthy Forests Initiative. This initiative set forth precursory guidance in June 2003 which eventually led to the passing of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act in November.

This initiative includes categorical exclusion tools which allow for hazardous fuels reduction activities using prescribed fire and mechanical methods under predetermined guidelines

In passing the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, Congress made a strong bipartisan commitment to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire to communities and restore our nation's forest and rangelands. In following national direction, the Blackduck Ranger District fire management program on the Chippewa National Forest conducted a thorough review of proposed projects not yet completed. On April 16, Blackduck District Ranger Tracy Beck made the decision to implement the "Healthy Forest Fuels Treatment Project," the Forest's first project using one of the categorical exclusion tools provided through the initiative.

This project covered 865 acres of fuels treatment including: 624 acres of large-scale prescribed burning; 217 acres of mechanical treatment; and burning slash piles created from timber activities on 24 acres.

For more information on the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 and the Healthy Forests Initiative, visit www.healthyforests.gov