



FACT SHEET



United States Department of Agriculture
Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

United States Department of Interior
Web: <http://www.doi.gov>

Making a Difference Wasatch-Cache National Forest -Utah

The Davis County Fuels Project was designed to reduce the heavy build-up fuels in the Gambel oak shrub vegetation adjacent to the City of Farmington, Utah. In 2003, wildfires burned approximately 2,900 acres in five separate fires in surrounding areas, on each occasion directly threatened residences structures in adjacent communities. The fires prompted the Forest Service and local government to collaboratively develop a plan to reduce the threat of wildland fires in the future. Through the fall of 2003, Forest Service staff met with local fire authorities and representatives of County and City government to formulate a strategy to meet the wildfire hazard.

In response, a two-pronged plan was developed. On Federal lands, the Forest Service proposed a combination of mechanical thinning and prescribed fire to treat about 1,600 acres adjacent to the City boundary of Farmington. On a parallel track, Davis County began the planning to upgrade a rough, four wheel drive road that generally defines the private - Federal land boundary for over 7 miles near Farmington and the City of Centerville. The County's proposal included not only the road improvements to allow access for emergency vehicles, but also thinning and vegetation removal to help ensure that the road corridor serves as an effective fuel break for the community. During the winter and spring of 2004, numerous meetings were held with local government and citizens and an environmental analysis was conducted. These efforts culminated in a decision documented in a Decision Memo made possible by new authorities that provided a categorical exclusion for the use of prescribed fire on up to 4,500 acres and mechanical treatments up to 1,000 acres. Concurrent with the Forest Service environmental review efforts, Davis County's proposal received funding under the Steven's Amendment.

In April, a mudslide in an area burned during the 2003 wildfires occurred which caused a shift in plans for using prescribed burning in the area. Sensitive soils underlie many of the slopes above Farmington and Forest Service officials decided to focus on mechanical treatments initially and to do further studies to determine the whether prescribed fire might expose slopes to mudslide hazards in the same way. Consequently, the decision issued called for mechanical treatment of up 100 acres of fuels along the Forest boundary. On July 20, 2004, Forest Service crews began thinning and chipping operations in some of the heaviest fuel accumulation areas. The combined Forest Service - community efforts represent a small, but significant, starting point in addressing the wildfire threat along the Wasatch Front in Davis County, Utah. Though this is the first effort of its type, it is hoped this will become a model for other communities to become involved and work aggressively to address the threat in their areas.