



# FACT SHEET



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

United States Department of Interior  
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## Making a Difference SAWTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST - IDAHO

An intensive mountain pine beetle epidemic is resulting in heavy mortality and fuel buildup within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA) on the Sawtooth National Forest. Fuel reduction projects are being implemented to reduce these fuel accumulations and potential wildfire behavior in nine priority areas (approximately 2,400 acres) surrounding subdivisions and highly developed recreation sites. These treatments are reducing threats to life and property, increasing firefighter and public safety, maintaining and in many cases enhancing the visual integrity of the SNRA, reducing the potential for current and future mountain pine beetle outbreaks, enhancing aspen stands and maintaining historic sage, grasslands, and meadows. Methods being utilized includes salvage-sanitation, thinning, patch cutting, group selection harvest, mowing and mastication.

These efforts are creating defensible space, maintaining and improving the resiliency of vegetation including the aesthetic aspect of the landscape, managing the vegetation within the campgrounds and dispersed campsites reducing hazards and providing a more desirable camping environment, and reducing the susceptibility of lodgepole pine stands to mountain pine beetle infestations.

Projects were implemented during 2003 and will continue through 1997 with maintenance treatments thereafter. The projects are located in the Sawtooth Valley, in portions of Custer and Blaine Counties, Idaho. Nearby communities include Stanley, Idaho.

Partners involved have included Custer and Blaine Counties and the Idaho Department of Lands and numerous home and property owners.

A scoping document was distributed on May 10, 2002 to over 700 interested parties, private landowners, special interest groups, individuals, and organizations. The Red Tree Fuels Reduction Project Decision Notice was signed on June 19, 2003. There are two phases to this project, which is expected to continue for five years. Phase I, the most immediate, short-term phase, identifies nine specific areas involving private property structures and highly developed recreation areas as the highest priority. Phase II, which will be underway shortly, will address actions needed to improve the overall health of the forest, on a landscape scale, in order to reduce fuels and tree mortality from insects and disease. These projects meet the intent of Title 1 of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.

Property owners are treating vegetation on about 140 lots reducing hazard on 1,300 acres utilizing Forest Health Restoration Grants approximating \$450,000. These grants are being used for protection and restoration efforts including removal of dead, thinning green trees, and replanting areas. This effort will continue in the future and additional property owners are moving forward with this opportunity.

To date, three timber sale contracts have been awarded removing 2.2 mmbf dead and dying trees reducing hazard on 450 acres. An additional 1.0 mmbf will be removed reducing hazard from another 250 acres. Also, additional smaller sales will be implemented in the future.

Service contracts are also being implemented which include the thinning and mastication of fuels on approximately 400 acres within the wildland urban interface. All these tools are allowing for greater

efficiency in accomplishing the stated objectives while improving forest health and protecting life, property and communities.

For more information on the Healthy Forests Restoration Act and the Healthy Forests Initiative, visit [www.healthyforests.gov](http://www.healthyforests.gov)

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