



FACT SHEET



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

United States Department of Interior
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Making a Difference Lolo National Forest - Montana

The Cherry Creek Fuels Reduction Project is located in the lower Cherry Creek drainage, approximately one third mile from an area with numerous homes, southwest of Thompson Falls, Montana.

The purpose of this project is to reduce hazardous fuels within the wildland-urban interface (WUI) of Cherry Creek. This area was chosen for treatment based on a collaborative process during the National Forest Management Act analysis for the Dry and Cherry watersheds. Individuals from the community visited on-site with the local Ranger District and concurred on the need for fuels reduction treatments in these areas due to their proximity to private property and homes. In August 2003, the need for treatment was again discussed at several public meetings during the 4,000 acre Cherry Creek Fire.

It was determined that by reducing fuels on approximately 290 acres initial attack fire fighters could more quickly and safely contain a fire. Also, the effects of the fire would be reduced within the treated area. The treatments will use mechanized equipment, helicopters and under-burning to remove ground fuels and ladder fuels. To lower the risk of stand replacing crown fires, intermediate sized trees will be removed to space the crowns of the remaining trees.



Cherry Creek Fuels Reduction Project Area (9/03)

This project was a perfect fit for use of the Healthy Forest Initiative's category 10 Categorical Exclusion—Hazardous Fuels Reduction. Two units were prepared, with an estimated volume of approximately 1 million board feet of timber. One unit planned for tractor logging contained nearly eighty percent of the merchantable and sub-merchantable volume and slash. The second unit (with the remaining twenty percent) will be helicopter logged. This project is a true fuels reduction project and contains both saw-log and non saw-log material. The purchaser will receive incentives to cut and remove the designated material from the site. Due to its low elevation, this project was attractive to purchasers for work during the winter months. On August 10, 2004 the sale sold to a local mill—for fifteen times the appraised rate.

Photo shows older ponderosa pine to be left. Ladder fuels consisting of small diameter Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine would be removed to assist in keeping fire out of crowns of larger mature timber.

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