

Ecosystem Restoration through Wood Utilization

The South Knob Stewardship Project is part of a landscape level effort to restore ecosystems and reduce hazardous fuels on private, Forest Service and BLM lands in rural northeastern California. Surrounding the project area are several thousand acres of restored sagebrush-steppe, aspen groves, springs and wetlands where once occurred hazardous levels of overstocked pine and fir stands.

South Knob is one of the first projects to utilize the Bureau of Land Management's stewardship authority in California. Stewardship contracts involve projects which care for land through broad-based community public and community involvement. Project cooperators for South Knob include Lassen County Fire Safe Council, Day Lassen Bench Fire Safe Council, private landowners and the BLM Alturas Field Office.

Planning started in July of 2003 and completion is expected by the end of November 2005. The project area covered 375 acres of over stocked pine and fir with interspersed pockets of aspen. Where timber stands faded into sagebrush, juniper had encroached to unnatural levels.

Project goals were to improve forest health, enhance aspen stands and remove encroaching juniper while utilizing woody material generated. Trees to be removed were chosen based on a number of factors including their form, condition, and position of their crown within the canopy, as well as aspect, and proximity to aspen stands and leave trees.

A local contractor was awarded the contract and accomplished the job with enthusiasm and professionalism. More than 275 thousand board feet of merchantable timber and 5,000 tons of biomass were removed from on site and utilized at a mill and cogeneration plant in Burney, California. Timber and biomass generated from the project helped to offset costs of restoration.

The South Knob Stewardship Project by itself is a small, but when combined with other area collaborative projects, a broad scale ecosystem-based restoration effort begins to take form.

Contact: Peter Hall, BLM Alturas Field Office forester, (530) 233-7928



Area photos before and after thinning project. (8-19-CA-4.tif, 8-19-CA-6.tif)