

Park Successfully Burns Roost Prescribed Fire in WUI Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, California National Fire Plan – Fuels Reduction

Whiskeytown National Recreation Area successfully completed the 285 acre Roost prescribed fire on June 3, 2005. A part of the Wildland Urban Interface Initiative to help reduce the threat of wildfire to communities at risk, this prescribed fire is part of a series of planned burns to reduce hazardous fuels along the east and south boundaries of the park, a critical area because of the proximity of nearby communities.



Redding and surrounding areas are shown in the background of the Roost prescribed fire.

The month of May had above average rainfall and below average temperatures. Fire management staff saw a window of opportunity to

accomplish one last project before fire season started. The Roost burn was selected because of its location on a north facing slope and being surrounded by roads and previous prescribed burns. Fire staff began monitoring fuel sticks and weather patterns on the burn. Fire crews thinned along fuelbreaks, park roads and underneath power lines. The window of opportunity came right after the busy Memorial Day holiday. After a warm weekend with temperatures in the ninety's, a storm brought ¼ inch of rain on the burn unit. After evaluating the unit, the decision was made to go ahead with the project. Press releases were sent out to media and agency partners, phone contacts were made and resources were ordered. On June 1 the weather was warm and winds above 30 mph were predicted in the valley. Crews began to blackline the perimeter of the unit. Public interest was high, especially after two wildfires in the nearby area destroyed over 100 homes in August 2004. All local media outlets came for a tour of the burn and helped tell the story to the community. On June 2, a helicopter was used for aerial ignition in the interior of the burn, which sent out a large smoke column that could be seen far across the valley. The winds helped to carry the column and kept it from settling in nearby communities. By the end of the afternoon the burn had been completed.

The project was done in coordination with California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, California Conservation Corps, US Service, local contract crews, Redwood National and State Parks and Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. The completion of these prescribed burns demonstrates Whiskeytown's commitment to reducing forest fuels and protecting communities at risk while restoring forest health.

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