

Limantour Prescribed Fire Initiates Strategic Fuelbreak Point Reyes National Seashore, California National Fire Plan – Fuels Reduction

A strategic fuelbreak, bisecting Point Reyes National Seashore, was successfully initiated during fall 2005 when two adjacent units, totaling 46 acres of coyote brush mixed with grass, were treated with prescribed fire along Limantour Road. This was the first treatment in the 4,182 acre Limantour Fire Management Unit, established by the park's new fire management plan. Additional burn units, and mechanical forest thinning will continue to build on this project.



Prescribed fire being used to reduce the density of coyote brush along Limantour Road.

Values at risk in the immediate project vicinity include several employee residences, the Point Reyes Hostel, the Clem Miller Environmental Education Center, and the Laguna Creek watershed, which provides critical habitat for threatened steelhead trout. The area is a busy public use corridor where vehicles on Limantour Road or campfires on Limantour Beach create the potential for wildfire. Fuel reduction along this corridor will make a wildfire easier to control, and will strengthen Limantour Road as a line of defense, protecting the communities of Inverness, Bolinas, and Olema, as well as park headquarters.

The primary objective of the 2005 Limantour prescribed fire was to reduce coyote brush by 40%, keeping the shrubs low and widely spaced. An immediate post-burn assessment determined this objective was achieved, and will be verified through continued fire effects monitoring. Without treatment, coyote brush will become tall, dense, and significantly more difficult to manage during a wildfire. Although the fuel load was substantially reduced, shrub survival was high. Many shrubs began resprouting from the base within a month of the prescribed fire treatment. In addition to hazardous fuels reduction, maintaining areas of coyote brush in an immature condition will promote habitat diversity in the coyote brush community.

Interagency cooperation during this project was highly effective. Firefighters from Marin County Fire Department, Bolinas Fire Protection District, Inverness Fire Department, Nicasio Volunteer Fire Department, East Bay Regional Parks, Skywalker Ranch, Marin Municipal Water District, and Golden Gate National Recreation Area assisted Point Reyes Fire Management with prescribed fire operations.

Finally, this project provided an exceptional fire education opportunity to 80 students visiting Limantour Beach, and 2 other groups staying at the Clem Miller Environmental Education Center.

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