

Bates Creek Watershed Restoration Project

“Effective fire prevention in the wildland urban interface is like a chain. It is only as strong as the weakest link,” said Rosey Thomas, Four Rivers Field Office Manager. “Everyone has to do their part, and it is often easier to do it collectively than separately.” Duquette Pines is a subdivision, surrounded by public land, located approximately one mile north of Idaho City, Idaho. Homeowners are aiming to make the fire prevention chain in their community as strong as possible. In April 2003, the Duquette Pines Homeowners Association Newsletter identified two areas of concern regarding fire danger. One was Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property west of the subdivision. The other was overcrowding of trees and brush on properties in the subdivision. The Homeowners Association, through its Board, pursued both problems, and their efforts are being rewarded.

The Board wrote letters to the BLM outlining their concerns and desire for action. This concern of citizens to protect their property along with Four Rivers Field Office staff’s concern to effectively manage the public land resulted in action. Several efforts have resulted from the desire of all parties involved to make Duquette Pines a more “fire-safe” community. Rosey Thomas and members of her staff attended a Homeowners Association meeting in May 2005 where they discussed plans for the area and facilitated a field trip to show what would be done. In September of 2005, work was started on BLM land. It included removal of trees that were nine inches and smaller in diameter, removal of ladder fuels from larger trees, and removal of brush that had fifty percent or greater dead limbs. The debris was hand-piled and will be burned in the fall of 2006.

The Homeowners Association partnered with Boise County to apply for a National Fire Plan grant from BLM that is administered through the Idaho Department of Lands. The group received a \$45,150 grant that will fund efforts to evaluate each property in the subdivision with respect to wildland fire hazards. The evaluation will estimate the hours needed to complete mitigation work. Subsequently, homeowners will be advised of the number of hours of labor that will be required of them to complete a ten-percent match for the work to be performed on their property. The match will consist of piling slash, moving firewood, and general clean-up of hazardous fuels, such as pine needles. The grant makes it possible to continue with work in the future. More projects are also planned on BLM land.



Duquette Pines property with dense brush and tress, note home in background.