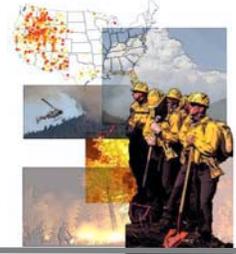


National Fire Plan

Rio Grande Riparian Forests



New Mexico - Hazardous fuels management and reduction is a key area of focus for the National Fire Plan. Dense thickets of vegetation create staggered levels of flammable material in the forest called fuel ladders. These conditions can lead to severe wildland fires. With funding provided by the National Fire Plan, additional emphasis is placed on minimizing these dangerous conditions. More than 1 million acres of fuels reduction projects will be completed in 2001 nationwide. These pictures were taken at a fuel reduction site in the middle Rio Grande Riparian Forests in New Mexico. The photo to the right illustrates the extreme damage that can occur when a wildland fire strikes an area that was previously overgrown with vegetation.



The photo below on the left is the before fuel reduction picture, as well as a perfect example of the hazardous environments the National Fire Plan aims to eliminate. The photo to the right is of the same area after a team has cleared hazardous vegetation.



Area before vegetation reduction



Area after vegetation reduction

For additional information on the National Fire Plan, visit www.fireplan.gov