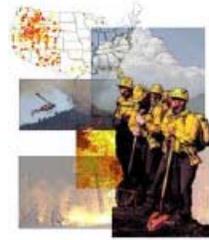


National Fire Plan

Cleveland National Forest
Pacific Southwest Region
California



Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project and the Effect on Wildfire

Tragedy Springs Project (2001-2003) & 2003 Cedar Fire

Project Description. The “Tragedy Springs” Hazardous Fuels Reduction project played an important role in stopping the eastward spread of the disastrous 2003 Cedar Fire. The project was a three phase prescribed burn totaling approximately 2050 acres entirely located on National Forest System land. Objectives of the project were to protect the community of Pine Valley, and to protect the forested areas of Mt. Laguna and Cuyamaca State Park (dependent upon the direction of a wildfire’s spread).

Implementation. All of the burns were daytime operations; in 2001 the burning was conducted in the winter; in 2002 and 2003, burning was conducted in the spring.

Accomplishment to date. 484 acres were treated in 2001, 575 acres in 2002, and 980 acres in 2003.

Effect of the project on 2003 Cedar Fire. The Cedar Fire, in San Diego County, started on October 25, 2003. Burning with unprecedented rates of spread, in the span of 5 days it burned over 273,000 acres, killed 14 civilians and one firefighter; and destroyed 2,232 residences, 22 commercial structures and 566 outbuildings.

The Tragedy Springs project served as fuel break, and as an anchor point for a hand-line / burnout containment operation. This combination stopped the eastward spread of the Cedar fire as it approached the communities of Guatay and Pine Valley, and the forested areas of Mt. Laguna.

While the prescribed burning project is widely credited with protecting several communities from the Cedar Fire, the benefits of the project would have been maximized had a riparian area running through the project area been treated. The consequence of the riparian area being left untreated was the loss of several thousand acres of timber within the north end of the Mt. Laguna Recreation Area.

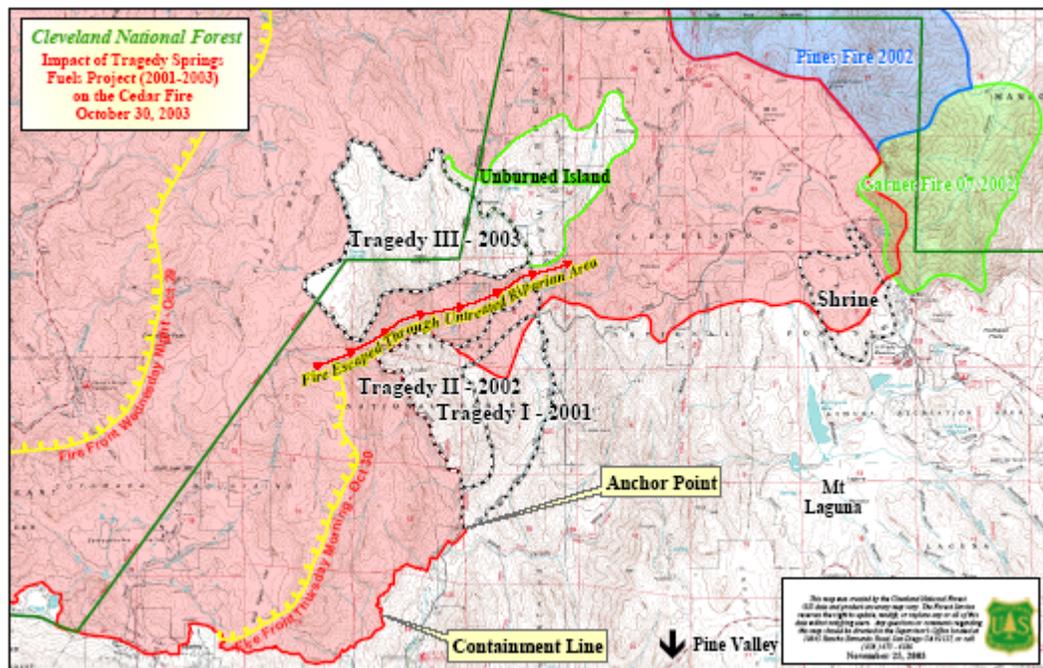


Figure 1. Map showing the project area in relationship with the 2003 Cedar Fire.

A full size copy of this map can be accessed on the Cleveland National Forest website at: [http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland/documents/documents/Tragedy Springs Project Impact on 2003 Cedar Fire.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland/documents/documents/Tragedy_Springs_Project_Impact_on_2003_Cedar_Fire.pdf)

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