

National Fire Plan Final Report

Willow Fire TES Habitat Protection

Region: PSW/5/California

Forest: San Bernardino National Forest

Date Prepared: October 17, 2002

General Information

Watershed Number: 180902081 Deep Creek, 18090208 Mojave River

State and Congressional District: California, 40th District

Project Summary:

In 1999, the Willow Fire burned 63,675 acres, of which 40,845 acres burned on the San Bernardino National Forest. The fire burned over 16,000 acres with moderate to high intensity and affected several federally listed species and a number of sensitive wildlife habitats. The fire was contained in December 1999. A post fire timber salvage sale was conducted in 2001. Numerous skid trails and landings were left in areas directly adjacent to a popular OHV area. This project was designed to minimize unauthorized use that could potentially occur and to prevent potential impacts to adjacent sensitive species habitats.

National Fire Plan funds (\$10,410) were received in the spring of 2002. A collaborative effort between resource and fire personnel and local volunteers resulted in seven sites being treated; OHV volunteers and resources and recreation personnel treated several additional sites. Several hundred plants were grown from locally collected seed, and out-planted on the skid trails along major access points to system roads and trails. Seed was hand broadcasted in several areas to promote vegetative recovery. Several miles of skid trails and landings were slashed with dead debris to prevent further vehicle trespass and compaction. Log erosion barriers were constructed to prevent major soil loss. Potential entry points were signed and monitored for further disturbance.

Summary of Events:

November -December 2001- Restoration activities began at the salvage site with funding from other grant sources. Activities during this time period consisted of slashing seven sites, signing 4 sites, seeding six sites, placing log erosion barriers at one site, planting 414 (total) early successional plant species (*Elymus elymoides*, *Poa* sp., *Artemisia dracuncululus*, *Artemisia tridentata*, *Cercocarpus ledifolius*, *Chrysothamnus nauseosus*, *Penstemon* sp., and Asteraceae sp.) at two sites to prevent vehicle access along Forest Service road 3N16, west of 3N14.

April 2002- System roads and OHV trail 1W17 that were closed to allow for fire recovery, were to be reopened on Memorial Weekend, May 22, 2002. A large coalition of volunteers from various Off Highway Vehicle clubs were called to help slash and

disguise timber salvage skid trails and landings adjacent to system roads and trails east of Forest Service road 3N14. On Earthday weekend, April 20, 2002, a group of 300 volunteers begin the slash work. Several miles of trails and roads are slashed in the area north east of the Big Pine Flat OHV staging area, adjacent to the trail 1W17 and Forest Service road 3N11. Grasses were germinated and grown in the greenhouses of the Big Bear Ranger Station native plant nursery with the help of volunteers.

May 2002- Resource employees and patrols monitored the areas previously slashed and inventoried new areas in need of disguise slash. Resource employees slashed unauthorized routes leading from the area known as White Mountain, or Forest Service roads 3N11 and 3N17. Grasses and shrubs were continuously cared for in the greenhouses at the Big Bear Ranger Station.

June-August 2002- Resource patrols monitored slashed sites and inventoried new areas in need of slash. Fire and resource personnel watered plantings on a bi-weekly schedule.

September-October 2002- On National Public Lands Day, resource, fire, and OHV employees assist 41 volunteers in out-planting over 300 plants (*Elymus elymoides*, *Pinus jeffreyi*, *Cercocarpus ledifolius*, *Artemesia tridentata*, *Salvia pachyphylla*) on critical entry points to skid trails along Forest Service road 3N16. Boyscout volunteers placed additional slash on skid trails. Local seed was collected and scattered throughout the rehabbed areas. Local fire crew watered and monitored plants and rehabbed areas weekly.

Project Conclusion:

Over seven hundred plants were out-planted at three sites, seven sites were heavily seeded, several miles of skid trails and landings were slashed, and four areas were signed. It is expected that future native habitat enhancement efforts at these sites shall include, but not be limited to, the following: watering out-planted individuals, replacement plantings of failed plantings, site maintenance (erosion control, exotic species eradication, litter removal, etc.), out-planting of native tree species, and monitoring for recovery and ecological health. As of this date, no site vandalism has occurred, minimal mortality has occurred, and all treatments are holding.

Photo Documentation:



Figure 1: This is a before photo of one of the sites restored in the fall of 2001. Notice the slash pile in the center of the photo.



Figure 2: This is the same site as in the above photo. Employees are spreading the slash piles to prevent erosion, assist naturally recruiting seeds, and visually disguise the trails.



Figure 3: This photo was taken after locally collected and grown vegetation was planted. Cages are being placed over the plants to prevent herbivory.



Figure 4: This photo shows the native grasses and shrubs growing in the Big Bear Ranger Station native plant nursery.



Figure 5: This is a before photo of the site that was planted on National Public Lands Day. The skid trails were previously slashed in the spring.



Figure 6: Volunteers from National Public Lands Day install sign at revegetation site.



Figure 7: This photo was taken after 300 native grasses and shrubs were planted on National Public Lands Day. Volunteers are installing vexar cages on the plants.

Project Contact:

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