

# **The National Fire Plan**

## **Areas of Managed Forest Slow Northwest Flank of Rodeo-Chediski Fire**

### **Arizona**

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Areas of managed forest, which had been recently treated with mechanical thinning and prescribed fire through National Fire Plan funds, slowed the Rodeo-Chediski fire's advance and enabled firefighters to protect the town of Show Low and neighboring communities.

"It was the deciding factor whether the fire would roll into Show Low as it looked like it would do, or would lay down and be suppressed by conventional forces," according to Jim Anderson of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. "The treatment basically allowed direct attack on the northeast flank," Anderson said. Direct attack by conventional means had been impossible due to the speed and intensity of the fire.

The weather conditions were of a kind "seldom seen in a century's time," Anderson said. Treatments that were "the best of the best" were what worked against the fire. Areas of "chop and scatter," where trees had been cut but not piled and burned and where no prescribed fire had yet been done, were ineffective due to the extreme weather conditions. They would have been treated with prescribed fire had the wildfire not happened first.

Representatives of a local organization agreed with Anderson's assessment. "We are extremely grateful that cooperative efforts to thin the forests near Heber have helped in some small way to protect homes and wildlife in this fire catastrophe," said Ron Christensen, chairman of the Eastern Arizona Counties Organization. "We are hopeful that this small success will encourage all parties to support and consider employing forest restoration efforts on a wider scale," said Dr. Martin Moore, executive director of the organization.

A local lawmaker also agrees that prescribed burning and mechanical treatment are needed. "Many of us have been worried for years about the [fire-prone] conditions of our forests," said Arizona State Legislator Jake Flake, who lives in the nearby town of Snowflake. "This needs to be a warning to us to work together to clean up our forests so this doesn't happen again."