

National Fire Plan

Dry Forest Mechanized Fuels Treatment Trials

Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council and the USDA Forest Service

Idaho

2002



New and innovative methods are being tested to reduce hazardous fire conditions in dry forests of the Intermountain West. The trials are intended to identify new and cost-effective ways to reduce hazardous fuels involving smaller diameter trees and brush with little or no commercial value, while minimizing environmental impacts. The trials tested the effectiveness and efficiency of a wide range of mechanized equipment and fuels treatments in a variety of forest settings in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. TSS Consultants (Sacramento, CA) and The Yankee Group (Philomath, Ore.) conducted the trials through a contract administered by the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council and funded through a National Fire Plan grant from the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest and Intermountain Regions.



The results of the field trials held in May 2002 were presented at meetings in Idaho in October. The meeting focused on the fuels reduction program for the Idaho City Ranger District, including mechanical equipment, prescribed fire, and other techniques. Participants learned about equipment effectiveness in ponderosa pine forests. Presentations summarized findings from the trials including: observations from equipment tested; ability of the equipment to effectively treat fuels; soil disturbance from operations; fuels left on site and cost of operation. Equipment tested ranged from all terrain vehicles using arches to move small stems to excavators with mastication attachments.

In addition, results of a study of current local markets for small logs and biomass were presented. Sponsored by the USFS – Pacific Southwest Research Station, the study focused on the feasibility of utilizing biomass and small logs generated by mechanized fuels treatment projects.



Up-to-date information is available on the DFMT web site: <http://www.theyankeegroup.com/mechfuels/> or contact Tad Mason, V.P. TSS Consultants at: tmason@tssconsultants.com or 530.528.2900 or the Idaho City Ranger District at 208.392.6681.