

National Fire Plan

Kiosk and Canyon Prescribed Fires

Washington

2002



To reduce hazardous fuels and reintroduce fire into the ecosystems adjacent to two wildland urban interface, or WUI, areas, the Methow Ranger District of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest in Washington State treated two areas near the town of Twisp with prescribed fire through funds from the National Fire Plan this year.

The first area treated was a 15-acre wedge-shaped area with ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, and lodgepole pine about 9 miles west of Twisp. The area is surrounded by homes on three sides. The Twisp River forms a boundary on the fourth side of the burn. The objective of the Kiosk prescribed fire was the protection of the nearby homes from wildfire.

A windstorm recently came through the area and caused “partial and complete blowdown of trees,” creating a fire hazard, according to Meg Trebon, fuels technician with the Ranger District. Last year, the district mechanically thinned the area to clean up the downed trees. The prescribed fire, hand lit by drip torches by four people, burned the thinning slash and fallen trees and reintroduced fire into the fire-dependant ecosystem.

The Canyon prescribed fire involved treatment of 365 acres of the Twisp River drainage about 11 miles from Twisp. The nearest homes were a third of a mile from the burn, with about a dozen homes in the area. The area burned was between a road on top of a ridge and a canyon creek drainage, which gave the burn its name. The fire was ignited by aerial ignition from a helicopter using a plastic sphere, or “ping-pong” dispenser, which released plastic spheres filled with potassium permanganate that ignited upon hitting the ground.

About 15 people were involved in the burn. Trebon said that the burn started at the top of the hill and worked its way down. The hand crew started at the road on top of the hill, and continued the fire line down the hill to the river on either side of the burn area.