

National Fire Plan

Past Hazard Fuel Treatments Reduces Intensity of Log Town Fire

Oregon

2002



Toward the end of the first week of July, a wildfire burned about 20 acres of Bureau of Land Management, or BLM, public land. Fuels reduction work completed on the land in 1999 as part of the Forest Creek Project reduced the intensity of the burn and stopped the fire from spreading. The Forest Creek Project continues thanks to National Fire Plan funds.

Firefighting forces were able to construct a dozer line in an area where a fuel break had been built. In contrast, BLM land that had not been treated within 300 feet of the private property line, due to landowner concerns, was subjected to a high intensity stand replacement fire that killed the understory and overstory.

The fire started in grass and burned into shrublands before spotting onto the adjacent BLM land. Direct attack of the fire on the private land was not possible due to the fuel load, causing high flame lengths of up to 6 feet and spotting up to 100 yards ahead of the fire.

Oregon Department of Forestry forces, contracted by the BLM to suppress wildfires on the public lands in southwestern Oregon, remarked on how the fire behavior changed in the treated BLM area, allowing for direct attack and establishment of control lines. "The fire behavior changed dramatically when the fire progressed from private to BLM land, allowing us to directly attack the head of the fire and quickly contain it," said ODF Unit Forester Dan Thorpe. BLM personnel on site observed this same fire behavior.

To date, the BLM Medford District has treated 5,997 acres, or 55 percent of the total project area of the Forest Creek Project.