

Protecting the Mt. Dell Camp from Wildfire

Utah State Division of Forestry



In 2009, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) approached the Utah State Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands (FFSL) with concerns about how to protect the scouts and camp hosts at the Mt. Dell Scout camp from wildfire. The Mt. Dell camp, located east of Mt. Pleasant Utah, hosts approximately 1,200 scouts and camp hosts on a weekly basis throughout the summer months. Situated amongst dense mid elevation gambel oak, the scout camp consists of dozens of structures and improvements, with limited ingress/egress options.

With assistance from FFSL personnel, a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) was established for the area. Because of the CWPP process, both the BSA and FFSL identified a shaded fuel break as the most effective form of protection for the Mt. Dell camp. Beginning in 2010 FFSL brush crews began work on the fuel break. Almost immediately, the neighboring community of Pine Creek inquired about the work being done and their homeowners association (HOA) approached the State about the possibility of extending protection to their community. The fuel break was then extended to the west to protect the Pine Creek community. Prior to the completion of the project, two additional communities expressed interest in participating in the effort. Both the communities of Pine Mountain and Whispering Pines were willing to provide land with which to extend the already four miles of fuels treatment.

The shaded fuel break was completed during the summer of 2014, culminating a nearly five-year effort. The finished project is six and half miles long, 300 feet wide and covers a total of 236 acres. In addition to the fuel break, the CWPP identified defensible space as a high priority for individual landowners. With the assistance of FFSL crews, local homeowners completed defensible space around numerous structures throughout all communities involved. Evacuation sirens were also installed in each community to provide wildfire warning.

In conjunction with United States Forest Service work on Pine Mountain, the Mt. Dell fuel break serves to protect countless people and property in the Sanpete County area. Thanks to all that collaborated with the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands to ensure the success of this project.

Link to aerial video of project site: <http://youtu.be/NPmY3jHECR8>.