

Fuels Accomplishment Success Story Upper North Fork Project

Date: 06/30/04

Location: Clearwater National Forest, North Fork Ranger District

Congressional District: Idaho

Contact person for follow-up questions: Pete Fitch or Mike Lubke, 208-476-8251

Acreege: The Upper North Fork Project Area totals 5,668 acres with 3,780 acres of prescribed burning accomplished to date. The remaining acreage is targeted for this fall.

Treatment type: The intent of this project is to reintroduce fire as a significant process within the ecosystem, thereby reducing the buildup of dead and down fuels, and increasing the seral diversity. As the project area is extremely remote with minimal road access, we used the Clear/Nez fire zone contract helicopter equipped with a sphere dispenser. The original intent was to light just the ridge tops with a point source pattern and allow the fire to back down into the creek bottoms. As it turned out we needed to establish fire much quicker in order to achieve the desired fire intensities and so we used strip-head firing on a grander scale. Species composition varies and can be a mix of conifers such as Douglas Fir, Grand Fir, Engelmann spruce, ponderosa pine, and lodge pole pine.

Partners: The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation expressed interest in this project after attending a field trip hosted by the Forest Supervisor, District Ranger, the FMO, and other staff members. Their objective was to restore summer range for big game. They have contributed approximately 33% of the funding for direct implementation costs.

Workforce: As noted above, ignition was accomplished primarily by using the fire zone contract helicopter with the attached module and one of the zone sphere dispensers. A small portion of one of the units was accomplished by hand ignition utilizing North Fork district personnel. Holding actions were minimal and these too were accomplished by district folks.

Photograph(s): See attached photos and descriptions.

Ruble Creek: 1130 acres (1080 acres ignited)

Hand ignition was initiated on 9/30/03 in the Ruble Creek drainage. The following day a helicopter was brought in to assist in igniting a larger block of acreage in that drainage. The results of the burning ranged from spotty under burning to some stand replacement in the Lodgepole Pine timber type. This burn is classified as a low to moderate severity under burn.



9/30/03 Hand Ignition



10/01/03 after Helicopter Ignition



Ruble Creek 06/29/04

Vanderbilt Hill: Size: 877 acres (400 acres ignited)

Vanderbilt Hill was ignited by helicopter on 10/02/03. Due to wet fuel conditions on the North and East slopes, only the South and West slopes were ignited. These slopes burned very well. The fire would be classified as a low to moderate severity under burn, with inclusions of small areas of stand replacement fire. Ignition photos were obtained but due to the volume of smoke in the drainages, these photos were poor, hence the solo post burn photo.



Vanderbilt Hill 06/29/04

Meadow Point: 734 acres (600 acres ignited)

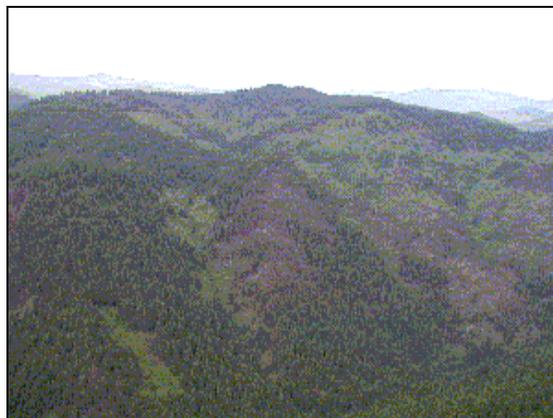
Meadow Point was ignited on 10/02/03. Only the high-energy Southwest slopes were ignited, but this accounted for 600 out of the 734 acres available. This unit burned very well. Under burning and stand replacement type burning was observed, especially in the brush fields. This fire is classified in the low to moderate severity class.



Post Burn 10/02/03



View from Rd. 715 10/02/03



Meadow Point 06/29/04

Upper Meadow Creek: Size: 2,927 (1,700 acres ignited)

Upper Meadow Creek was ignited on 10/03/03. Only the 1700-acre Southwest slope was ignited due to wet conditions on the North and East aspects. This portion of the unit burned very well. Very active fire was observed in the grass, brush and timber types. Patches of stand replacement fire were observed in the stringers of Lodgepole pine that covered the upper half of this unit. Under burning of many Aspen groves was documented as well as recycling of most of the grass component with this stand. This fire is classified as a low intensity, low severity under burn except in isolated areas where stand replacement of Lodgepole Pine occurred. This would be classified as moderate severity and intensity.



Midway through burn 10/03/03



Upper Meadow 06/29/04



Upper Meadow 06/29/04