

Warm Lake Basin Hazardous Fuels Removal Warm Lake Idaho 2007



Project Description: The Warm Lake Basin Hazardous fuels reduction projects are located on the Cascade Ranger District, Boise National Forest. The greater Warm Lake Summer Home Area is comprised of 70 structures located on or near the west, north and east Shore of Warm Lake. The fuels in the Warm Lake Basin vary considerably, depending upon aspect and elevation. In general, fuels are a combination of ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, grand fir, and western larch. The strategy developed in the

WUI (Wildland Urban interface) areas within the Warm Lake Basin was to protect the summer home area from a high-intensity wildland fire. The projects planned were to reduce hazardous fuels, overgrown trees, brush and grasses, that had built up over a long period of time. Activities included in the projects were mechanical thinning and prescribed fire by aerial ignitions.



Implementation Plan and Accomplishment to Date:

Hazardous fuels treatments began in the Warm Lake Basin in 1996 and have continued to the present day, with an average of one to two projects planned and implemented each year. Acres treated from 1996 to 2007 using both aerial ignition landscape burns and mechanical treatments total 9,095 acres. The project objectives for all the mechanical fuels projects centered on reducing the overstory, or branches, treetops and dead trees, within the lodge pole pine stands. The second objective was to remove dead and downed woody material

on the forest floor that can often transition a ground fire into a crown, or treetop, fire. The created slash and existing dead and downed fuels were hand piled, covered with waterproof material and burned during the late fall or early spring burn.

Tested by fire: The hazardous fuels reduction projects in the Warm Lake Basin were recently tested by the Monumental and North Fork fires. The three most critical days during the Monumental fire burned 3,000, 5,200 and 2400 acres respectively. The hazardous fuels treatment areas provided distinct fuel breaks which the suppression resources used to directly control the fire perimeter and also provided viable areas to conduct burn outs to remove trees, shrubs and grasses in advance of the oncoming fire. When the running crown fire entered into the Warm Lake south and north Project areas, the intensity of the fire lessened to the point where the active, running fire behavior ceased. The flaming front dropped to the forest floor, becoming a moderate to low intensity ground fire with greatly reduced flame lengths.

Contact: Mark Loseke
mloseke@fs.fed.us