



Planning for ponderosa

The area in front of you was thinned in 1998 to restore more natural conditions and mimic the historical role of fire in this ponderosa pine forest. Careful management will help maintain healthy forests for the future.

Before European settlement, frequent small fires swept through these forests maintaining open, park-like conditions and mixed species of aspen, oak, ponderosa pine and fir.



Around 1900, miners and settlers cut down the existing pines. This intensive logging, and a century of fire suppression, resulted in dense, even-aged ponderosa stands.

These overgrown forests are susceptible to damage from insects, disease, and large wildfires. Their lack of diversity also makes them less attractive to wildlife.



Wildlife will benefit in many ways from thinning, this forest. Fire hazards will be reduced and plant and animal diversity increased as remaining trees grow larger and healthier.

An open forest allows more light and moisture to reach the ground, encouraging plant diversity and attracting a wider variety of animals. Big pines spread their limbs, offering nesting habitat for Northern goshawks, and roosts for wild turkeys.

Saplings provide important winter food for mule deer. Pygmy nuthatches forage for insects in branches and foliage of young trees and depend on dead and diseased trees for nesting cavities.

Abert's squirrels are so closely tied to the ponderosa pine forests for food and cover that a large wildfire could devastate the local population. Removing small trees and dense undergrowth reduces fire danger—protecting squirrels and people alike.