

**Star Ranch Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project  
Boise National Forest**

2007



**Project Description:** The Star Ranch Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project is located on the Boise National Forest near Placerville, Idaho and the Star Ranch subdivision. The project area is predominately filled with thick stands of low elevation pine and Douglas fir. The objective was to alter the tree-stand structure through both mechanical thinning and prescribed fire which meets the goals of the Boise County Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan. Using mechanized equipment and

controlled burning, specialists are able to reduce understories, densely packed shrubs, grasses and trees, and overstories, branches and treetops, to slow the spread of a wildland fire. The Idaho Department of Lands also awarded the Star Ranch subdivision an \$85,000 Stevens Grant. These funds are available to treat hazardous fuels on private land to reduce risk to the Wildland Urban Interface, where homes meet the forest.

The project also incorporates the use of biomass, small diameter, low-quality wood that has little or no commercial value. A local individual has adapted his logging business, to recover and market biomass. The wood fiber is ground up and transported to Ontario, Oregon where the material is currently being stored. The materials will feed a cogeneration plant, which uses a heat engine to generate electricity and useful heat that may have been wasted in a conventional power plant. Once the plant is operational it will provide electricity and steam for heating and cooling of a supermarket in Ontario, OR. The plant will produce more electricity than needed for the supermarket and the excess electricity will be sold to the local electric coop. There are also plans to use the biomass in making residential and commercial wood pellets for sale in the open market.



**Implementation Plan and Accomplishment to Date:** This is the second year the project has been recommended by the Idaho State Working Group. In Fiscal Year 2006, 433 acres were treated. Another 1,365 acres are planned for treatment in Fiscal Year 2007. In FY 2007, 1707 acres were treated by removing hazardous fuels, dead and downed trees and overgrown shrubs and grasses. The break down of technique and acreage is as follows: prescribed fire

of 995 acres; commercial thinning of 115 acres; mechanical thinning (mastication) of 249 acres; hand thinning and piling of 442 acres. All work was completed by September 30, 2007.

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