



News Release

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Carson Ranger District
1536 S. Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Contact: Franklin Pemberton
(775) 882-2766

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Forest Service Proposes Plan to Reduce Wildfire Risk in Washoe County

Carson City, Nevada...The Carson Ranger District is proposing a project to reduce the risk of wildfires on the west side of Washoe Lake, between Bowers Mansion and the Mt. Rose Highway. The project would thin trees and remove dangerous accumulation of brush in strategically placed patches on 2100 of the 5500 acres in the project area. The project is designed to reduce the risk of intense wildfire. Work would begin this fall and extend over a period of three to five years.

“Unless we actively treat these fuels, more catastrophic wildfires are inevitable like the one we just experienced.” said David Loomis, Project Manager. Like the Waterfall Fire area, north Washoe Valley is in the urban wildland interface zone where homes are nestled amongst wildland grass, brush, and trees. “The rough terrain and dense trees in this area make it tough to fight wildfires,” Said Kelly Martin, Carson Ranger District Fire Management Officer. “Our firefighters need to have the trees and brush thinned to give them a fighting chance to stop fires before they reach homes or take out entire hillsides.” Martin, pointed to the fuels work done by both the Carson City Fire Department and the Forest Service as instrumental in defending the Lakeview Subdivision in the recent Waterfall Fire.

The fuels reduction work would primarily consist of fuel breaks near homes and thinned areas that would act as “speed bumps”, slowing a fires’ progression, reducing the intensity of the blaze to give firefighters the opportunity to aggressively attack the fire. Within those thinned areas or “speed bumps”, the Forest Service plans to reduce “canopy cover” to forty percent with an average spacing between crowns of fifteen feet.

The Ponderosa and Jeffrey Pines, while adapted to the arid climate of the west are especially vulnerable to fire when they have been subjected to long-term drought, overcrowding and insects. The trees in this area are especially vulnerable due to their similar age and close spacing.

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These undesirable conditions are the result of the logging that occurred in the Comstock mining era and the absence of low intensity wildfire that the trees have adapted to over the centuries. "Trees in the area are currently under attack by the IPS pine beetle due in part to the recent years of drought," said Ed DeCarlo, Forester on the Carson Ranger District. "Pockets of trees killed by the beetles pose a significant risk and are very flammable."

This project has been in the planning stages for the past six months. "It is important that we reduce the wildfire risk on this beautiful stretch of forest," said Gary Schiff Carson District Ranger. He also noted the work of the Nevada Division of Forestry on private property in the area. "Our project will dovetail with their work to significantly reduce the risk to local homeowners."

An open house meeting on the project will be sponsored by the Forest Service at Pleasant Valley Middle School on August 11 at 6:30 p.m. Comments may be sent to Gary Schiff, Carson District Ranger, 1536 South Carson St. Carson City, NV 89703 or emailed to comments-intermtn-humboldt-toiyabe-carson@fs.fed.us. Call David Loomis, North Washoe Project Manager at 882-2766 for more information.

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