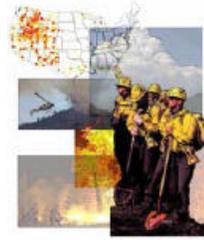


National Fire Plan

San Bernardino National Forest
Pacific Southwest Region
California



Hazard Fuel Reduction Project Switzer Peak Dead Tree Removal

The Switzer Peak Dead Tree Removal Unit is 20 acres in size and was initiated in late August 2003 after two months of planning. Large diameter dead trees with dead crowns were removed to reduce the fuel loading above Highway 18 just east of the Skyforest Ranger District Office. This treatment served to connect other fuel reduction projects between the Skyforest Ranger District Office and the community of Skyforest.

Implementation of the project was accomplished by utilizing a timber contract with whole tree yarding and yarding of unmerchantable material (YUM) followed up with service contracts to remove the remaining cull logs and slash. It was administered by local Forest personnel.

This treatment assisted fire suppression personnel in holding an important stretch of Highway 18 during critical firing operations on the 2003 Old Fire. While spotting did occur within the unit during firing operations, the recent reduction in fuel loading, and the open stand conditions, offered firefighters access and an opportunity to safely extinguish the spot fires with minimal impact on the overall firing operation.

Photo 1 was taken on Hwy 18 looking west. The treated area is on the right. During the Old Fire, Hwy 18 was used as a control line during extensive firing operations (Left side of road).



In essence the firing operation could proceed more rapidly because the intensity of the spot fires had been reduced as a result of the Switzer Peak thinning project. If the fire had successfully crossed the road several thousand structures including the Skyforest Ranger District Office, Arrowhead Villas, and Crest Park Subdivisions would have been directly threatened.

Photo 2 was taken from Hwy 18 looking south below the highway. This area was fired from the highway during suppression operations.



Photo 3 was taken from Hwy 18 looking north above the point where photo 2 was taken. Note that mortality is still occurring in project area.

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