



January 2009

Rich Wildfire

Fuel Treatment Effectiveness

Location Information	
Region: 05	Forest: Plumas District: Mount Hough
Wildfire Information (consistent with 5100-29)	
Fire Number: CA-PNF-000784	Fire Name: Rich Fire
Date of fire start mm/dd/yr: 07/29/2008	Final fire size (ac): 6,112
Date when fire entered treatment (if different from start date): 07/30/2008	
Treated Area Burned: 342 Acres	Date Fire Contained: 08/09/2008
Fuel Treatment Information:	
Kingsbury-Rush DFPZ (Defense Fuel Profile Zone) was approved in June 2001 under the HFQLG Framework as amended by the January 2001 ROD.	
There were 5 prescriptions in the DFPZ boundary, all were service contracts. No timber sales were used to implement this project.	

Kingsbury Rush DFPZ Treatment Prescriptions and Acres					
Total Size	Hand thin, burn piles and underburn	Machine harvest and underburn	Mechanical thin, masticate, no underburn	Mechanical thin, masticate, and underburn	Underburn only
3838 acres	1736 acres	1657 acres	272 acres	45 acres	128 acres

Additional Information

Narrative:

The Rich fire was a human caused fire that started at the bottom of the Feather River Canyon about 1500 on July 29, 2008. The fire was first managed by the local initial attack resources, next by the Type II Incident Management Team (IMT) working other fires in the area, and finally by a Type I IMT ordered by the Plumas National Forest.

Outside the fuel treatment area the fire intensity was moderate with high scorch heights and significant tree mortality. Inside the treatment area, the fire intensity was low with low scorch heights and low tree mortality. The fire inside this treated area burned with a low spread rate due to a lack of ladder and ground fuel which had been removed by the earlier fuel treatments. One of the Division Supervisors from the Type 1 IMT reported that the fire column was reduced significantly and the spread rates slowed down when the fire hit the ridge (fuelbreak).



This person noted that any and all direct suppression efforts became successful in the area of the fuelbreak. Before the fire hit this area, only indirect methods at the head of the fire were successful. The fuelbreak slowed the fire so much that incident resources were able to concentrate the suppression effort on higher priority areas closer to communities and deferred suppression efforts at the head of the fire and the fuelbreak.

The ridge top fuel break, where the Rich Fire entered the Kingsbury-Rush DFPZ, had been commercially thinned, grapple piled, and burned in the late 1990s prior to Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group (HFQLG) legislation. At that time the thinning resulted in canopy closure of approximately 30%. The area was further treated as a HFQLG DFPZ with mastication, hand piling and burning completed with HFQLG funding in 2003 - 2005. The combination of treatments aided in the suppression effort and certainly allowed for the lessened tree mortality. There are continuing debates as to the appropriate canopy reduction to reduce fire behavior; however the 30% canopy cover in this study was shown to have a successful effect in decreasing the fire behavior.

The Kingsbury-Rush DFPZ was used to help contain the Rich Fire. Three hundred forty two acres of the DFPZ burned in the Rich Fire. Overall, the intensity of the fire was lower in the DFPZ and preliminary reconnaissance indicates greater tree survival in the treated versus untreated area.

Because of the fire’s proximity to communities, the fire was given a high priority for allocation of suppression resources. This aided in the positive fire suppression outcome. In addition, the ridge top location of the fuel break and gentler terrain beyond also aided in this outcome. However, a fire that was expected to burn long into the summer, costing additional money, tying up valuable fire fighting resources and damaging natural resources in an area that had already seen tremendous fire activity, quickly ran out of steam when it hit the DFPZ. Incident resources were able to suppress the fire before it could get into other valuable communities and watersheds.

Conditions when fire entered treatment			
Date: July 30 @ 1500 - Quincy/ RAWS			
ERC (value and percentile): ERC 82 87 th Percentile		Windspeed and direction: SE 4-6 MPH	
Temperature: 89		RH: 15	
Fuel Moistures			
1 hr: 3	10 hr: 5	100 hr: 9	1000 hr: 10
Live Fuel Moisture: 100			

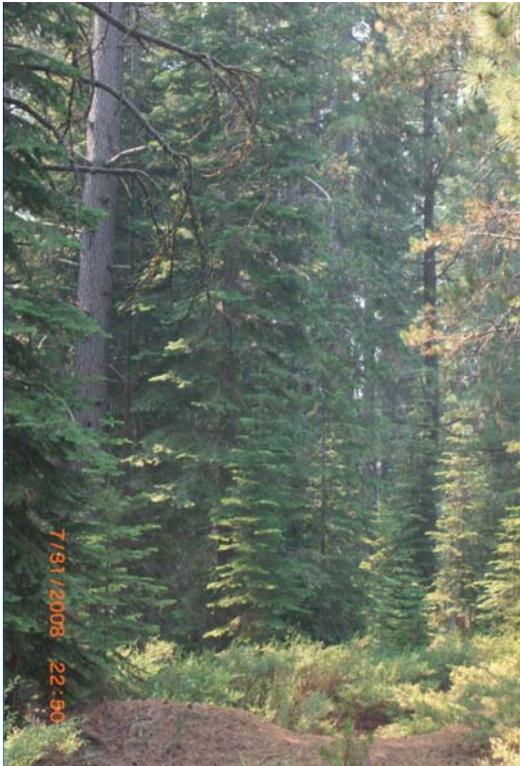


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Photo History



Photos 1 (untreated) and 2 (treated): Treated Kingsbury-Rush DFPZ and untreated landscape near the Rich Fire. Note the large amount of aerial fuels in the untreated stand.



Photo 3: High severity fire effects in the Rich Fire, down slope from the Kingsbury-Rush DFPZ.



Photo 4: Aerial view of Kingsbury-Rush DFPZ after fire passage.



Photos 5 and 6: Note the high severity in the untreated foreground and low severity in the treated ridgeline.



Photo 7: Active fire in DFPZ. Note the low flame lengths.



Photo 8: Wildfire backing through DFPZ



Photo 9: Smoldering fire with minimal severity fire effects in DFPZ.



Photo 10: After fire passage, note the mosaic underburn of the Kingsbury Rush DFPZ.



Photo 11: Area in the Kingsbury-Rush DFPZ where the Rich Fire burned to a road and held.



Figure 1: Map - Rich Fire Perimeter
HFQLG Treatments, Accomplished and Proposed

