

Idaho

Sweetwater Creek Forest Stand Replacement

Project Facts

EQIP Financial Assistance\$857,750
 Acres treated324
 Number of trees planted.....90,000

Tree species planted: ponderosa pine, western larch

Project Location: Nez Perce County, north central Idaho

Resources concerns addressed:
 forest health, forest vigor, wildfire risk

LEWISTON FIELD OFFICE



HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND
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Project Description

When the Nez Perce Tribal foresters wanted to restore a portion of the forest near Sweetwater Creek, they got help from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to help fund the project. Their aim was to increase the vigor of trees growing in the forest and create a forest that would not be devastated by diseases or wildfire. To do this they replaced the grand fir trees with a species mix that was prevalent 100 years ago - species that are less susceptible to disease and insect infestations.

After decades of no natural wildfire, the forest was dominated by thick grand fir stands. Grand fir trees tolerate shade and eventually crowd out tree species that need more sun. the problem is grand fir is susceptible to root rot which spreads easily through the densely spaced trees.



For the Sweetwater Project, grand fir trees were cut down along with dead or dying trees of other species. Removing the overstory trees prepared the area for planting seedlings of two species native to the area but shaded out by grand fir: ponderosa pine and western larch.

EQIP helped pay for the site preparation work as well as planting the pine and larch seedlings. These species are more resistant to root rot and, when mature, have thick bark to protect them from wildfire.

Environmental and Public Benefits

Soil

Reduced soil erosion potential by reducing the risk of wildfire that could remove all trees and sear the soil.

Water

Maintaining a natural forest structure maintains the integrity of the watershed
 Reduced the potential for

Plants

Removed grand fir trees that were infected with and susceptible to root rot
 Created openings in the forest to allow

Animals

developed a more complex wildlife habitat by creating edges between forests and open spaces.

People

The tribal forests provide